Edited by Henry Kozicki

Western and Russian Historiography

Recent Views

Introduction by Sidney Monas

WESTERN AND RUSSIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Also by Henry Kozicki

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Western and Russian Historiography

Recent Views

Edited by

Henry Kozicki
Professor of English and Linguistics
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Introduced by

Sidney Monas

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A Note on Transliteration from Cyrillic

There is no completely satisfactory system of transliteration. The phonetic (or, as some like to call it, "fanatic") system is precise and economical, but to the uninitiated reader, seeing *Cexov* on the page for *Chekhov* or *Tolstoj* for *Tolstoy* can be a mildly unsettling experience. In this collection, we have used, consistently in the notes, the Library of Congress system as used in most libraries in the English-speaking world. In the text we have modified it somewhat by omitting the Cyrillic soft sign (') and hard sign (") and by using the adjectival name-ending -sky instead of -skii. Thus, we would have Dostoevskii in the notes and Dostoevsky in the text, but wish to assure you, gentle reader, that he remains the same person. In the case of familiar spellings of familiar names, we have retained them in the text: thus, Tolstoy, and not Tolstoi. In the case of Russians who have published extensively in English, we have retained their own preferred spelling of their names: thus, Yanov, and not Ianov. In the Library of Congress system, it should perhaps be added, that both the soft e (pronounced "yeh") and the hard e (pronounced "eh") are transcribed by "e". In the notes we have tried to follow the Library of Congress system consistently.

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cal Process (Moscow, 1981–1987): vol. 1 (1981) is subtitled "Reality, Material Basis, Primary and Secondary"; vol. 2 (1983), "Integrity, Unity, and Multiformity"; and vol. 3 (1987), "Dialectics of the Modern Epoch." An article, "The Subject of Geography and the Science of the Interaction of Society," appeared in the American journal *Soviet Geography* 10.5 (1969).

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1 Introduction: History Problems

Sidney Monas

The essays included in this volume express diverse emphases and points of view. They by no means constitute a systematic survey of current problems in historiography. Nor do they even deal with them as broadly as the very interesting retrospections on the historical writing practiced in America that have recently appeared.[1] They do express, and some of them rather eloquently, the knottier problems of current concern to historians and philosophers of history, most of which will be recognizable, for all their shift in emphasis, as the old unsolved problems of nineteenth century historiography: the relationship between individual decision and the context of social forces in which it takes place; the relationship between event and systemic structure; the perspective of the historian, its rootedness in his own life experience and the importance of that experience in determining his "chronotope," the limitations of his temporal and spatial horizons;[2] the role of temperament and ideology; the role of method – scientific or intuitive-imaginative; the relative roles of narrative and analysis; the problem of values; the problem of professional identity in the face of the proliferation of specialities, interdisciplinary approaches and epistemological skepticism; the question of the proper public role of historical studies; the problem of language – of what is an appropriate language, as well as the question of what style reveals, of whether it is a primary or a secondary manifestation; the problem of motivation, a psychology appropriate to the study of history. All these issues are touched upon, though none is definitively resolved.

In the west at any rate, history, having long been exposed to the social sciences, has recently drawn closer to philosophy and literature. This may seem odd if one remembers that history as a professional discipline began when Leopold von Ranke laboriously distinguished its method from that of philosophy (Hegel) on the one hand and literature (Sir Walter Scott) on the other.[3] Today, however, it is not what Ranke considered to be Scott's irresponsible use of sources that distinguishes literary studies, but an extreme self-consciousness with regard to method, linguistic usage, and epistemology. Indeed, new developments in linguistics, psychology, and anthropology have had a similar impact on philosophy and on all humane studies. A new discipline has emerged in the last decade or so – narratology – that involves the study of history as well as the study of fiction.[4] Hayden White's complaint in 1966 of a "resistance throughout the [historical] profession to almost any kind of critical self-analysis" seems somewhat less justified today.[5]

Along with the professionalization and institutionalization of the study of history, it is easy to discern an accompanying process of internationalization. Of course, the republic of letters has always been to some extent international and cosmopolitan, and the historian's standing as a man of letters has always kept him in touch with his "fellow citizens" elsewhere. On the other hand, one cannot discuss professionalization without noting sources of financial support and social prestige, and at the birth-time of the historical profession in the nineteenth century these tended to come from the state.[6] Nor should one think that the central subject matter of professional history – the ascendancy of the nation-state – was entirely unconnected with this. In our own time, the new social history has diminished the state's importance and shifted its centrality; simultaneously, the institutionalization of historical studies has facilitated and formalized exchanges, both on a national scale in the form of conferences, workshops, symposia, etc. Along with internationalization, interdisciplinary exchange has accelerated.

But where in all this can one place the Soviet Union and eastern bloc countries? From the late 1950s, they accepted "exchange" in principle, and a series of official agreements were signed and programs launched. In practice, exchange was difficult and limited. Archives were largely inaccessible to foreigners (and in many cases also to natives!) and the heavy pall of censorship and restriction lay over the whole enterprise. Even through these difficulties, foreign historians visiting the Soviet Union were aware that they had Soviet colleagues whose abilities were not justly measured by their published work. Systematic surveys of historical studies pursued in the west appeared regularly in Soviet and east European professional journals, but these were generally of a predictable, stereotyped, and political nature. Historical orthodoxy could and did change, with a rapid and massive shifting of gears, without becoming less doctrinaire. One recalls, among other things, the fate of Mikhail Pokrovsky's reputation, and the curious casuistical pronouncements about Shamil, to say nothing about attitudes to the British and American pasts as Soviet foreign policy shifted.[7]

As late as 1985, doctrinal authority was still at least officially in place. Nothing substantial changed until 1987. Historians, perhaps because they are more conservative or timid or more highly institutionalized than other writers, responded more slowly to glasnost. But by 1987 they were living in a different world.

B. G. Mogilnitsky's essay "Some Tendencies in the Development of Contemporary Bourgeois Historical Thought" appeared in the February 1987 issue of *Voprosy istorii* [*Problems of History*], the journal of the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Henry Kozicki called the article to my attention a year or so later, and I translated it. Kozicki, from his post as the editor of the journal *CLIO*, made the essay known to a broad range of western historians and to a large number in the USSR as well. Surprisingly, the request for response produced a flood of commentaries from distinguished practitioners of history and the philosophy of history. Relatively few took Mogilnitsky's arguments head on; more responded to his essay in order to express their own view of the state of the profession. The need to comment on that state seemed quite widespread, though of course not everyone agreed that it was in crisis.

Since Mogilnitsky's essay appeared in February 1987 and contains no citations more recent than 1984, it was probably written sometime in 1984 or early 1985 – essentially pre-glasnost. Mogilnitsky follows the familiar Soviet format: "bourgeois" writers and thinkers desperately seek alternatives to the Marxist definition of their problems since that is a definition that confronts them with their insolubility in "bourgeois" terms; failure to find such alternatives demonstrates the impasse in western thought, which in turn indicates the structural flaw of western society and its approaching and inevitable doom. What is new, as G. R. Elton points out here, is the gentlemanly tone. Mogilnitsky is polite, and he pays some attention to differences and nuances. Nevertheless, his use of "bourgeois" and "idealist" as overextended categories and his assumption that the historiographic crisis reflects a deep fear of paralysis at the socio-economic level mark his essay as belonging to the pre-glasnost era.

In a more recent article not included in this volume, Mogilnitsky shows himself more critical of dogmatic Stalinist Marxism.[8] He questions the inevitability of Stalinism in the transition from capitalism to socialism. While keeping his argument within a Marxist framework and stressing the importance of social forces, he nevertheless emphasizes the role of alternative choices for the leadership of a revolutionary movement. Given the situation of the 1920s, he insists that there was indeed a possible choice other than collectivization and forced rapid industrialization – a choice expressed in Lenin's late writings on the course of his New Economic Policy as well as in the elaboration of these Leninist themes by Nikolai Bukharin, a recently rehabilitated figure. While Mogilnitsky sees "choice" as emerging out of and bounded by historical circumstance, he emphasizes "alternativity" and calls the problem of realistic choice "basically a psychological problem." And psychology, in this context, he insists, cannot be reduced to a simple reflection of existing socio-economic circumstances. Psychology thus has at least some degree of independent explanatory power in history.

Mogilnitsky's 1989 essay at least is very much a part of a major turmoil over the way in which history has been studied in the USSR. While Stalinism and "the cult of the personality" (as formula had it) have been pretty thoroughly rejected, there is considerable controversy over the roots of Stalinism as well as the fundamentals of its nature. Both the international and the Russian revolutionary movements before the first world war, the experience of "war communism" 1918–21, the intra-party discussions of industrialization during the New Economic Policy, collectivization, the five-year plans, Stalin's conduct during the second world war, and the diplomacy and domestic policy of the time of the cold war, have all been intensively reexamined, though controversy is far from over, and the bureaucratic history "establishment," though under mild siege from younger historians, is far from completely shaken. While traditional history textbooks have been largely discredited, new ones have not yet been published to take their place.

The entire conceptual stereotyping that has guided the study of Soviet and Russian history is in upheaval, from periodization to the nature and significance of particular epochs and personalities. *The History of the Communist Party of the USSR*, that classic guide-book that used to cast the shadow of Stalin on every wall, is now being completely rewritten, and on the basis of new archival research, V. P. Danilov, the editor of this collegial enterprise, has recently given an interview to American scholars outlining the difficulties he and his group have encountered from retrograde institutions like the KGB as well as the disagreements and controversies that have sprung up within the group itself. The new work, when it appears, will present a far more complex picture than its predecessor.[9]

American scholars of Russian and Soviet history, most of whom had been severely criticized in the past, have begun to appear in Russian translation, by no means uncontroversially but with an on-the-whole awesomely favorable reception: Richard Pipes, Robert Conquest, Alexander Rabinowitch, J. Arch Getty, Jerry Hough, Sheila Fitzpatrick, Stephen Cohen, Robert Tucker. A number of joint conferences have been held, accompanied by joint publication.[10] Gone are the days of unitary interpretation, and Soviet historians can now participate in the dubious delights of, for example, Getty's and Conquest's disputations over the "body-count" of the purges.[11]

Of course such disputes are not altogether as petty as they might at first seem. The new social and cultural history, as they have come into greater prominence in the study of the Soviet and Russian past, with a new generation of historians, has posed a sharp challenge to the older generation and its predominant "totalitarian model." Although Getty's figures for losses in the purges are very much lower than Conquest's, he readily concedes they were horrendous enough. The main point of contention between them is not the exact magnitude of the purges but their nature and mainspring. Getty sees them as having their origin in a movement from below, in the grass-roots of the party, and even there actually reflecting a movement in the population itself. Conquest sees them as fundamentally manipulated by Stalin. In general, the new social history tends to de-emphasize and diminish the importance of Stalin and his personal paranoid proclivities and to seek explanations for events in popular movements and in popular culture. Sheila Fitzpatrick, for instance, probably the most influential of the new social historians, tends to see the basic energizing force of the entire revolutionary process in the social mobility that accompanied it, and all the major events of the 1920s and 1930s are explained in her work with at least some key reference to the process of social mobility.[12] Jerry Hough, one of the most spirited opponents of the totalitarian model sees "modernization" (in the Weberian sense of "Rationalisierung") as the key to historical development in the Soviet period, with Stalinist authoritarianism as merely a phase in that development and never as "total" as had been made out.[13] Such views are fiercely attacked by the now outnumbered historians of the older generation like Pipes and Conquest who, while no longer defending all the details of the totalitarian model, still see Stalin, and even more than Stalin, the nature of the Communist Party, as the malevolent force historically responsible for today's openly avowed debacle.[14]

Given the new prestige of America in the USSR and especially among the Russian intelligentsia, due in part to the fact that American scholars have been saying in print for decades many things that Soviet scholars have not even allowed themselves to think, it is not surprising that American scholarship on the history of Russia and the Soviet Union is looked on as having a certain authority. Nor is it surprising that contending points of view should attempt to reinforce their contentions with reference to what American scholars say. What is ironical in this is that many of these scholars have in the past relied heavily on their officially suppressed Soviet colleagues as informants and guides to archival materials. The maverick communist Roy Medvedev has played an especially important role in such covert collaboration, but so have many Soviet professors. I should add that some American scholarship, based on materials to which Soviet scholars had little access, has also come into its own now – the work, for instance, of Leopold Haimson and his students based on the Menshevik archives.[15] In any case, the process of liberation from a rigidly dogmatic framework seems well underway among Soviet historians, if not yet entirely complete.

In December, 1990, on a visit to Moscow and in my capacity as editor of *The Slavic Review*, I had a meeting with the editorial board of *Istoriia SSSR* [*History of the USSR*]. The editor spoke for the group. The meeting was very friendly. We agreed to consider each others' works for publication, to review each others' books, etc. The editor agreed that a diversity of views had to be represented. He did insist, however, that history remained a science, and divergence did not impugn objectivity, which remained the basic standard for the historian. From his tone, I almost had the feeling that he saw in me a possible betrayer of what Peter Novick has called "that noble dream," the dream of historical objectivity, and was letting me know he and his men would have none of that.

If the study of Russian history shows distinct signs of life after decades of sterility, American Studies in what was formerly the USSR is potentially an even livelier field. In the article we include here, N. N. Bolkhovitinov writes:

> A rigid class approach pushed American studies in the Soviet Union into a self-induced isolation from world science and thus into dogmatism. In the last fifty years, we have not translated a single major work by an American historian, apart from the writings of two well-known Marxist authors, Herbert Aptheker and Philip Foner . . . (184)

And again:

> A widespread denigrating and vituperative approach has excluded comprehensive and objective investigation, and reduced some fields of history – especially, modern American foreign policy – to vacuous insubstantiality. (179)

Aptheker and Foner, however, were not simply "well-known Marxist authors," but party members or at least very close to the party and spokesmen for its official line. Whether they took their cues from their Soviet counterparts or vice versa is difficult to determine, so much alike were they. And in the realm of foreign policy, Bolkhovitinov still insists on blaming the United States for the cold war, citing a barrage of American "revisionist" historians without taking any account of their opponents and completely overlooking the fact that one of the most prominent revisionists he cites, David Horowitz, has completely changed his mind.[16] Until the Soviet Union opens its archives more widely than it already has, argument over the origins of the cold war will continue.[17] Given what we now acknowledge, east and west, about Stalin's policies generally, it is a shrewd (and safe) guess that responsibility for the cold war will at the very least come to be shared.

Back to Mogilnitsky and his appraisal of western "bourgeois" historiography: by now, phrases like "the sharpening struggle of two social systems" and "the threat of nuclear catastrophe" do seem distinctly out of date. And if our historiography has really abandoned the "idea of Progress" it is surely not simply because of a deepening pessimism grounded in a sense of the inevitable inability of our social system to solve its problems. In this century of terrible destructive wars, depersonalization, bureaucracy, displacement of peoples on an unprecedented scale, and collapse of the family – phenomena that have had their impact on the Soviet at least as much as on the American systems – it has not been an easy idea to sustain. Again, Mogilnitsky seems to confuse the uncertainty, hesitation, diffidence before the complexity of events, and notions of plural causality often characteristic of our scholars, with "obscurantism" and "fideism," which are not dead, but which are certainly not typical of our current historiography.

One of the striking features of current Soviet historiography is the revival of interest in previously banned Russian "historiosophy," from the writings of the nineteenth-century slavophiles to the brilliant neo-byzantinist Konstantin Leontiev to the historical "morphologist" (who had some influence on Spengler) Nikolai Danilevsky to the religious revival of the turn of the century that included such figures as Nikolai Berdiaev, Sergei Bulgakov, Pavel Florensky, Vasilii Rozanov, and Lev Shestov. Among these figures is also Mikhail Gershenzon, author of *The History of Young Russia* and the real founder of Russian intellectual history. There is also an intense but also rapidly expanding cult of Mikhail Bakhtin, who died only in 1975, but whose thought and world outlook are correctly associated with the 1920s. In all fairness, I should point out that to the small extent this real revival of interest has manifested itself in specialized professional journals, it has been more in *Voprosy filosofii* [*Problems of Philosophy*] than in *Voprosy istorii*.[18] Nor will I accuse Soviet historiography of "fideism" and "obscurantism" on this account, since the revival embraces figures of genius from whom historians have much to learn.

Paradoxically, Mogilnitsky points out, as historians have succeeded in establishing the "difference" of the past, they have undermined the sense of the public importance of history in the contemporary world. For if the past was foreign and its people not like us, what "lessons" can we draw from their behavior? In all branches of the human studies today, and in history too, there is a good deal of epistemological skepticism. This is perhaps reinforced in America by a fundamentally anti-historical streak in our culture. The idea that the past imposes constraints and limitations on human activity, that our lives are part of a momentum that had its origins long before us, goes against the grain of American thinking. America is, after all, the place of the fresh start, of beginning life over again. There has always been an antiquarian interest in the past, and patriotic, monumental histories have always been popular. We have recently seen the popular passion for unearthing "roots" – the genealogy of the oppressed. But we have never gone much for what Nietzsche called "critical history," the cerebral nature of which precludes its popularity.[19]

Perhaps with the growing awareness of the limitations of America's power and resources since the 1970s, a certain beginning respect for history may be discerned. But it is not yet deeply rooted in American culture. In eastern Europe by contrast, nothing is ever forgotten, and while this may be, in Nietzschean terms, a dubious advantage "for life," it does impart a certain morose public grandeur to the study of history while at the same time reminding us of the Chinese who prayed for the kind of times historians might leave as blank.

Mogilnitsky is certainly right about the trend towards "scientization" in the study of history, and the counter-trends it has provoked: relativism, subjectivism, "narrativity," and "historical writing as rhetoric." In this connection Ernst Breisach's present essay on the New History in America is instructive. At the turn of the century such notable figures as Frederick Jackson Turner and James Harvey Robinson attempted to break with the literary-rhetorical tradition established by figures like Francis Parkman, Willard Motley, and J. G. Prescott, insisting that broad knowledge of the sources combined with sheer eloquence of expression were insufficient standards for historical writing, which should show as well some advance in the generalizing power that is typical of science.[20] Unlike Henry Adams, who looked to physics as the model for his "law of phase," the New Historians tended to look to the social sciences. Broad social movements rather than individual "great men" became their object of study and while none of them neglected style, they tended to look on it as something separate from and secondary to substance.

Like its counterpart in literary studies, the New Criticism, the New

History retained its adjective even after it had aged considerably and grown quite diverse as a movement. The older New Historians, as Breisach points out, left the study of "great men" only slowly and reluctantly, joining it to a history of institutions and movements. He points out as well the complication of the Progressives, who thought the historian need not abandon the positivist-empiricist method and reasoned critique by "taking sides," but should on the contrary identify himself with those historical forces that fostered them. Carl Becker, a late, brilliant, and original New Historian wrote a well-known essay of extreme epistemological skepticism, "Every Man His Own Historian," and spent his last years in intellectual despair.[21]

That history was a study that combined methods sufficiently systematic and sufficiently generally accepted to be reminiscent of science with an exercise of imagination equally reminiscent of literature has been and still is a basic, if not always fully conscious assumption, of most professional historians. If the disproportionate prestige the scientific part has carried has come under some attack recently, it is rather to right the balance than to eliminate the systematic study of sources as an element in the writing of history. Breisach's account of the New History is very instructive in this regard.

Quoting Geoffrey Barraclough on the "shift of focus from the special to the general, from events to structures, and from description to analysis" – a shift considerably influenced by the prestige of the French *Annales* school but already discernible in the New History – Mogilnitsky notes with some implicit approval the interdisciplinary approach, the considerable influence of Marxist methodology, and the growth in professional self-consciousness. And yet, he points out, scientization has not justified the hopes invested in it, for it has remained half-hearted, "basically idealistic." Manifestations of this "half-heartedness" (a condition that has especially negative overtones in Russian culture) are the "oddly co-existing ideas that refute the pretension to science." Fundamental among these, according to Mogilnitsky, is the notion of the ultimate unfathomability and irrationality of man. Here he refers to such very different historians as Lawrence Stone and Peter Loewenberg who both emphasize the significance of non-rational elements in history. The idea that there might be a science of that borderland area where the unconscious and the conscious meet – an area that would include symbolic action and interpretation, dreams, myth, folklore, and literature – does not seem to be one that Mogilnitsky would willingly entertain. Although in his 1989 essay he seems open to the need for a psychology in the study of history, he does not seem kindly disposed to the notion that depth psychology in any of its forms might effectively fill that need.

In 1926, the Marxist V. Voloshinov, a friend of Bakhtin's, published a book called *Freudianism.* He begins with the statement that there can be "no science of the unconscious," but then goes on to co-opt (covertly) the entire Freudian model of the structure of the psyche and its dynamics by transferring it to the realm of language and linguistic phenomena. The degree of repression present at any given moment manifests itself in the discrepancy between inner and outer speech on the one hand, and between informal and formal speech on the other. The greater the discrepancy, the closer to a crisis or revolutionary situation. A decade or so after publication of this book, Voloshinov died in Gulag. Today, in America at least, there is scholarly controversy as to the degree of Bakhtin's contribution to this and Voloshinov's other brilliant book, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, and it is very much a part of the current vogue of Bakhtin, though it does not seem to have made much impact on historians as yet.[22] Mogilnitsky does not mention it.

Historians who have tried to move in the direction of science through the formulation of laws and large-scale patterns in the process of change have not been abidingly well-received in the Anglo-American professional historical establishment in spite of the temporary *popularity* of Oswald Spengler in the 1920s and Arnold Toynbee in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Mogilnitsky is correct in citing the professional hostility with which they have been met.

There are many reasons to be wary of Spengler: his determinism, his dour anti-modernism and rejection of the possibility of anything creative in the modern, in science, philosophy or the arts, his emphasis on Caesarism, on administration and engineering as the only legitimate activities available to the modern mind. I suspect Spengler's real claim to our attention is not as the scientist he proclaimed himself to be, but as a powerful artist of the historical imagination, an image maker and symbolist, engaged in just the kind of artistic-historical enterprise that Mogilnitsky tends to see as distinctly secondary to the process of creating a scientific history. What is memorable in Spengler are his metaphors of culture that link in a common trope all the expressive forms of a given culture, by which, indeed, he defines a given culture.

Mogilnitsky is dismayed by what seems to me Robert Fogel's wise and reasoned statement that his work in "cliometry," in advancing mathematical methods, intended no rejection of history as an art. Mogilnitsky sees in western historiography the lack of a system of basic concepts, an apparatus of basic categories for the interpretation of historical reality. He acknowledges that art may provide a certain handle on reality, but insists that history must grasp reality in scientific concepts usable not only by their originators "that reveal the essentially predictable connections of the real world."

The word I have translated as "predictable," *zakonomernyi*, is one that Soviet historians have been fond of, and sophisticated western historians like Lawrence Stone have shunned. It means "measurable by rule," "regular," "lawful," hence "predictable." Historical synthesis, broad-scale, trans-national and trans-epochal studies are especially a disaster area, according to Mogilnitsky, for lack of such a body of scientific concepts, and in this context he is critical of Fogel for relegating science to a secondary use. Mogilnitsky deplores as well the frequent appearance of such phrases as "the enigma of history," or the "unfathomable nature" of man. While he does have some kind words for Max Weber, he seems to feel that Marxism alone provides the basic vocabulary of scientific concepts that history requires.

This is not a good time to argue the virtues of Marxist conceptualization. The world of "practice" huddles in vast and somber reproach to that world of "theory." If we look, however, at the most impressive works of broad scale synthetic history of the past two decades – the works of Immanuel Wallerstein, Perry Anderson, Fernand Braudel, for example – a distinctly "Marxisant" if by no means doctrinaire Marxist influence is apparent. But one should also mention the anti-Spenglerian book by William McNeill, *The Rise of the West*, and the French journal on whose work he draws *Les cahiers du histoire mondiale*. I should also point out that synthetic history has not been less of a disaster area in the USSR, where practice has favored multi-authored composite volumes in broad-scale studies and the officially approved grab-bag of "scientific concepts" have on the whole resulted in quite unpersuasive syntheses.

One of the more ambitious large-scale histories of Russia was produced recently in English by Alexander Yanov, who had emigrated to the United States in 1976. Yanov purports to see a kind of long-term cyclical pattern in Russian history, oscillating between "reaction" and "reform" in which domestic and foreign policy are closely linked and in which relations with "the west" seem a kind of touchstone. If not entirely persuasive, Yanov's book is nevertheless quite interesting, but did not receive the attention it deserved from professional historians either here or in the USSR and made little impression on a broader reading public.[23]

When Mogilnitsky writes of the extensive academization and professionalization of historical studies and attendant overspecialization, he touches on a matter of genuine concern. In a brilliant article of some years ago, Robert Darnton, by a careful count and study of the history course-offerings in the catalogues of a few major universities, showed how it was possible for a student to learn a good deal about certain specialties that would not have been available to her twenty years ago, yet acquire no sense at all of history as an integral long-term process. In Russia, there is heartening evidence to the effect that bright young historians are eager to break away from the professional monopoly of institutes, academies, and universities.[24] In the United States, the only alternatives to the university are think-tanks with a rather narrow "policy" orientation and a large but also largely unpredictable reading public.

Mogilnitsky sees the dissociation of different branches of historical knowledge as a threat to the unity of history as a scholarly discipline. He sees an expansion of disciplines and sub-disciplines accompanied by a decline in the erudition of specialists and a corresponding loss of capacity to conceptualize the historical process in its integrity. Even source criticism, the pride of nineteenth-century professional achievement, has deteriorated, he says. He notes the unverifiability of much that is presented as argument or evidence in fields like psychohistory, the use of "counter-factual" hypotheses in cliometry, and the often shrill and denunciatory wrangling between fields. None of this, he says, raises the credit of history with a broad reading public.

Lawrence Stone's unfortunate image of "the historical rats" leaving the sinking ship of the social sciences helps Mogilnitsky move with a touch of humor to a discussion of the revival of narrative history, to which he is not entirely unsympathetic. He sees narrative as once more foregrounding *events* as opposed to *structures* so much beloved by the French *Annales* school and our own social and cultural historians – as reaffirming the notion that "the historical world is a world of events." Yet he deplores its literary-artistic emphasis, its composition not so much of events as of "linguistic constructs" that assume the absence of an objective reality. Of course that is not exactly what is assumed; only that the historian is not the author of the events, but of an account of those events, and that such an account can be communicated only by means of "linguistic constructs" that have a generic history of their own and that therefore arouse generic expectations and that partake of the inherent ambivalence of language. What is assumed to be absent, therefore, is not reality, but the human capacity to communicate the experience of that reality without recourse to subjectivity. That reality cannot of course be "reconvened," but only inferred from the fragmentary traces it has left behind.

With regard to the new rhetorical self-consciousness in the writing of history, Mogilnitsky, quite rightly, singles out Hayden White's *Metahistory* as central. But the book appeared almost two decades ago, and it is only in the last few years that it has had much influence or prestige among professional historians. It was immediately hailed by literary scholars as sharing their concerns and to some extent their methodology. White acknowledges his considerable indebtedness to Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism.* Like Frye, and with considerable literary and philosophical sophistication, if perhaps also with some degree of over-schematization, White, attempted to establish a link between generic forms and the shapes of human temperament. White's aim, at least as I see it, was not to belittle the historian's traditional, indirect links to "objective reality," such as the use of sources, "traces," source-criticism, etc., but to liberate and expand the notion of how history could and should be written and the role of imagination in the process.[25]

But White's historical colleagues, especially those of the older generation, did not like it one bit. They tended to dismiss it, more or less in the manner of G. R. Elton here, as something difficult to understand but probably having something to do with style, a secondary matter at best. White, however, concerns himself with style and "literary shaping" not for their own sakes but for what they reveal of the historian's mind and temperament, his "sensibility." Style is the surface manifestation of what is deepest in the soul, the form in which sensibility manifests itself. It provides the best access to that depth. The link with literary studies is not, as conservative historians have assumed, a mere concern with expressiveness, but with the shaping and creative power of the imagination.

All the historians and philosophers of history White deals with were scrupulous investigators and massively learned men, nor were they dim at analysis or explanation, but their learning and their acuity were the product of a temperament whose energy and imagination shaped them, and that shape was an integral and inevitable part of their meaning. White's most recent book makes his point even in its title: *The Content of the Form.* Form and content, in history as in literature, are separable only for heuristic purposes. Form is as much a part of meaning as content, and content must have an embodiment, an "emplotment," in a form with which it is in constant interaction. Thus the historian interprets events (or structures) through the traces they have left, and the reader interprets the historian. The fact that students, including, alas, graduate students, no longer read historians as such, but only in fragmented form, as partial contributors to the establishment of that great-history-book-in-the-sky where someday "objective reality" and all its past permutations will be established, is a great impoverishment for the study of history.[26]

Mogilnitsky concludes that there is no real alternative to the Marxist understanding of history. My own feeling is that what is useful in that understanding has been absorbed, with or without acknowledgement, by western historiography. Edmund Wilson, a culture-hero of my generation, called Marx, "the poet of commodities!"[27] I don't suppose that is the way Mogilnitsky sees him. I think it was inevitable, given the dynamics of argument, dialogue and exchange, given above all the doleful experience of Marxism in eastern Europe, the USSR and China in our time, that we should fairly early on come up against the limitations of Marxism and try to transcend them.

In my opinion, the most interesting appreciation of White's work and its importance comes from Peter Novick, who understands it quite well; the most interesting critique from Lionel Gossman, who is sympathetic and acknowledges his debt to White, but in parting company with him falls back on the work of Leon Goldstein. The latter is no "objectivist," in the sense that he does not believe the past can be "objectively" reconstituted, but only inferred from the marks, traces, texts, it has left behind. "Facts" are not discovered, they are inferred from the above-mentioned traces; they are composed. Their method of composition, however, is regulated by norms established by communities of scholars; in this, history is not fundamentally different from the natural sciences. "This," however, tends to shift attention from the *writing* of history to its *methods and procedures of research* and to leave an unbridged gap between that troubles Gossman (296, 303, 394). It sees the essentially scientific quality of history as residing in its professionalization, and institutionalization, in the process of research and discovery rather than in the process of expression and articulation. White's refusal to differentiate between history and the philosophy of history or historiosophy is rejected by Gossman because it does not take account of the element of scholarly exchange and critique in the constitution of facts and the capacity for such exchange to transcend ideological and esthetic disagreements. Mogilnitsky, while he acknowledges White's significance for contemporary historiographical thought, makes no attempt to come to grips with his work as Novick and Gossman and others have done.

Geoffrey Elton's response to Mogilnitsky is an essay of considerable charm and wit, which seems to fall back on the neo-Kantian notion of history as an individualizing, particularizing science, something Tolstoy thought was a contradiction in terms. If history teaches anything, Elton says, it teaches skepticism of overarching generalizations and big synthesizing conceptions. His charm and wit are rooted in this matrix of genial skepticism. He invokes skepticism as the proper antidote to proclaimed authority, yet he dismisses White somewhat disingenuously, failing to see the liberating, de-institutionalizing, de-professionalizing, de-regulating implications of his work.

For a man who has been accused of indulging "the most outmoded ideas," it seems to me that Peter Munz's response to Mogilnitsky is exceptionally generous. He sees the Soviet historian's virtue in his attempt to establish some kind of causal link between the varieties of historiography he examines, something outside the writing of history that operates on all the varieties and binds them together. But surely that something is the tired old notion of the impasse of bourgeois society so deep that bourgeois thought cannot confront it, not a notion, it seems to me, that stands up too well these days.

Munz is concerned, and I think rightly so, with the university teaching of history, its fragmentation of chronology and theme in our smorgasbord arrangement of courses. In any fair sized history department, a student can take only a small proportion of the courses offered, and the logic by which such courses are chosen and presumably linked is often highly suspect. I fear this is one of the consequences of the professionalization that Gossman and Goldstein commend. Munz seems to attach its intellectual origins to what he calls "historism" (*Historismus*) as distinct from "historicism," which he also does not like, but which he sees as something different. Historicist thinking tended to see each chronological period and each society as an end in itself, as expressed in Ranke's dictum that every period is equidistant from God, and that God is manifest in every moment of time. Yet for Ranke such an understanding seemed to depend on a close study of long-term processes, the unravelling, for instance, the separating out from each other, of the secular state and religious authority in the history of Europe.

About "historicism" Munz is more ambivalent. On the one hand he seems to accept Karl Popper's assault upon it.[28] But Popper equates historicism with historical determinism, where Munz sees it as at least to some extent a quest for historical intelligibility. One does not have to assume a single process or a single "covering law." Given the existence of human will and intelligence, such laws need not "determine." On the contrary, knowing how they are patterned, their regularities, their *zakonomernost*, enables one to overcome them. Water does not flow uphill, but it can be dammed, pumped or bridged.

If such "laws" are ever to be formulated with any real generalizing power, they will have to include psychological terms, a grounding in psychology. For Vico, his "New Science" was a science of the mind, and the evidence for its possibility and the clues to its understanding were linguistic. In that realm, rhetoric and hermeneutics were not outmoded studies, but repositories of knowledge and sources of method. Munz seems not unfriendly to such notions, yet he dismisses psychoanalysis with: "One cannot psychoanalyse dead people." As if psychoanalysis were exhausted by its application to therapy and were not as well a mode of interpretation applicable to all aspects of human life?

"Counter-factuality" also has more uses than Munz is willing to grant it. Not only has it played a significant role in cliometry, but something like it enlivens the current Soviet historiographic debates. Mogilnitsky, in his 1989 essay, calls it *alternativnost* – a consideration of what might have followed from policies that appeared as alternatives at one time, but were rejected. If the decision to collectivize agriculture had not been taken and the New Economic Policy had developed beyond 1928, what would have been the consequences for Soviet society? Surely every serious historian of the period, at the very least to himself, poses the question.

The views of the Soviet historians and philosophers of history represented here diverge and offer promise of a more pluralistic and "polyphonic" profession to come, and even of some de-institutionalization and decentralization of historical studies. There is still a Marxist line, and some considerable residual tenderness for Marxism as a system of thought now liberated from its formerly centralized chain of command and pronouncement. A. I. Rakitov feels that "Marxist concepts . . . have demonstrated their historical limitations." V. N. Sagatovsky, in what is perhaps the broadest "sorting out" of ways to make historical connections, and pronouncing them all good and useful within their limitations, finds room for both Marx and God, to say nothing of literature and philosophy, and comes closest in my opinion at least to the spirit of Hayden White, in that his tolerance, breadth, and spirit of attention and accommodation cannot but be liberating if taken seriously.

A. V. Margulis idealizes and Kantianizes Marx by insisting on the fundamental distinction between "those societies that build for man," for the fulfillment of human potential, and those "for which man is building material." This is precisely the distinction made by the great martyred poet, Osip Mandelstam, in 1922, in his remarkable essay, "The Nineteenth Century."[29] Marx and Engels, Margulis insists, envisioned "socialism" as a kind of society in the first category. But the major drift of the Russian revolutionary movement operating in the draconian circumstances of Tsarist repression shifted away from the vision of man-the-subject to a fixation on "using" man, and by whatever means, to create the so-called "objective conditions" that then become the "true marker" of socialism rather than the "subjective" development of man himself, his "inner" condition. Man was thus transformed into a mere object, and the contingent circumstances of his life, his social environment, were thus fetishized. Margulis sees Stalin and Stalinism not as the creators or prime movers of this shift, but as emergent from it. In addition to its evocation of neo-Kantian Marxism (not unknown in the 1920s) and its congruence with Mandelstam's recently rediscovered essay, Margulis' stress on inwardness, subjectivity, the state of the soul, and his corresponding "defetishizing" of "objective conditions," is highly reminiscent of the group of writers who published the *Landmarks* (*Vekhi*) miscellany in 1909, breaking in a dramatic way with the hitherto prevalent materialist tradition of the radical Russian intelligentsia.[30] Contributors to that volume included former Marxists like Sergei Bulgakov (later rector of the Orthodox theological seminary in Paris) and Nikolai Berdiaev, Peter Struve, Mikhail Gershenzon, and Solomon Frank, who are today being reprinted and rediscovered in the turmoil of perestroika. Rakitov, Sagatovsky, and Margulis, as well as the great shades of the Russian fin-de-siècle religious revival that lurk in their background, do seem to me to constitute something at least relatively new and promising in Soviet historiography, though as yet more characteristic of *Voprosy filosofii* than *Voprosy istorii*, and not without suggesting some danger of a "return to 'fideism' and 'obscurantism.'"

Yuri Pletnikov, on the other hand, is there to assure us that old-fashioned Soviet Marxism is not dead. His essay is couched in polite, strictly scholarly terms, and is logically argued on the basis of a firm understanding of classical Marxist texts. Its spare references to Lenin are again firmly in line with Marxist argumentation, and not there for the sheer weight of their political, "doctrinaire" authority. There is no citation of contemporary political authority. These are minor, though significant, conventional departures from the traditional style of such Soviet essays. Basically, he remains strictly within the framework of orthodox Marxist argumentation and reasserts the validity, the "substantiality," of Marxism as the intellectual framework for a scientific approach to the study of history. Pletnikov makes no mention of the lack of a Marxist psychology. While he does discuss Soviet elaborations of Marx's concept of "Asiatic society," he seems either unaware of or uninterested in the rather intense discussions that have surrounded Karl Wittfogel's ideas in the west.[31]

The Soviet historical profession has, if I may be permitted to use that phrase in this particular context, "come out of the closet." Centralized command has been broken and parochial isolation overcome. The process of internationalization, communication, and exchange is intense and energetic. Russian history, Soviet history, the history of the world, are being looked at with fresh eyes, and that creates an atmosphere of exhilaration which is of worldwide interest. In the Soviet Union today, the study of United States history, as a genuinely serious and "open" (i.e., not foreordained) study, opening out for the first time in the terms that

Bolkhovitinov describes, gives hope of fresh insights to come from which American historians too may be able to learn. Some old baggage, still being dragged along, needs to be discarded. But the spirit of the enterprise is fresh and promising.

A. N. Sakharov, in acknowledging his profession's debt to western historiography of Russia and the Soviet Union, points out that the Soviet scene was not always as dismal and monolithic as appeared to western eyes, and that often, beneath what seemed a uniform surface, important work was being done, and that in terms of unpublished work, the knowledge and skills, the methods and archive-wisdom of professional history cadres, much can be expected now that censorship and rigid control have been withdrawn. Soviet historians have learned a lot from their western counterparts; soon, it will be the west's turn, given the closer archival access, the long suppressed zeal and more immediate investment of Soviet historians. The international conferences and cross-publishing ventures that he indicates should bear interesting fruit.

Juhan Kahk's essay on "cliometry" provides an interesting counter to Mogilnitsky's rejection of "counter-factuality." Kahk – reasonably, in my opinion – defends it. He seems also better aware than most of the problems and promise of mathematical methods applied to the study of history, their usefulness and limitations, and seems pretty much in key with Fogel's discussions of the subject. That it is "neutral territory" is belied by his own essay, yet his judicious assessments and conclusions go far to neutralize it. Since this has been an area, for all the controversy surrounding it, much more broadly developed in the United States than anywhere else, it is not surprising that the Soviets should now, in greater numbers, be coming to us to learn. Kahk's clear-eyed and intelligent appraisal of the field might indicate that we have something to learn from them as well.

Let me return in closing to Mogilnitsky's essay. Is there, then, a "crisis" in "bourgeois" (i.e., "our") historical thought? If there is, it is of long duration and will not end soon. Hayden White's work, though now generally recognized as important, as it was *not* ten years ago, is still widely misunderstood. It does not deny the growing importance of science, method, professionalization in matters of research, sifting of data, institutionalized exchanges, yet it refuses to countenance the separation between research and the final written product that Gossman, following Goldstein, seems to see as increasingly inevitable. It insists instead that history, for all the method that goes into it, is too intricately rooted in subjectivity to avoid being an art. Unable to escape narrativity, it cannot altogether cast off its link to fiction and myth. In the last century, however, fiction has proved more various, profound and inclusive in the narrative forms it has developed, whereas historical narrative has largely remained in the nineteenth century. Fundamentally, White's call is for a narrative technique capable of encompassing the results of new methodologies. While Goldstein and Gossman see the reality of historical study in its increased institutionalization, White implicitly urges a psychic distancing from that process of professionalization for the purpose of encompassing it in the finished work.

On the one hand, Peter Novick seems to understand White, to sympathize with his work and to place him correctly in the history of what he calls *That Noble Dream*, the illusion that history could be told "as it really happened," could be reconstructed "as it was." On the other, in a recent round table discussion of his own work, Novick has rather emphatically stated that although the past cannot be reconstructed, but at most reconstrued, a story about it told that is at best highly congruent with other stories about it; nevertheless, nothing, as far as actual practice is concerned, really follows from this.[32] While I would like to think there is no historiographical crisis, but only an ongoing richness of unsolved problems, Novick's statement as a kind of "last word" about his own intelligent, thorough, and imaginatively argued book gives me pause.

Notes

1. *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, ed. Michael Kammen (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); also of interest in this connection, and an exceptionally articulate and eloquent book: Lionel Gossman, *Between History and Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).
2. The term "chronotope" belongs to Mikhail Bakhtin; see his *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84–258.
3. Leopold von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, eds, intro. G. G. Iggers and K. von Moltke (New York: Irvington, 1983), 25–29.
4. Apart from numerous articles in *History and Theory*, *New Literary History*, *CLIO*, and other journals, there has recently been the announcement of a new journal to be called *Narratology*. See also the very interesting book edited by Gary Saul Morson, *Literature and History* (Stanford: Stanford and historical practice, especially in the context of the study of Russian literature and history.
5. Hayden White, "The Burden of History," *History and Theory* 5 (1966).
6. On Ranke's appointment to the University of Berlin, see Leonard Krieger, *Ranke: The Meaning of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 42–44. On Michelet's to the College de France

and to the Archives, see Arthur Mitzman, *Michelet, Historian: Rebirth and Romanticism in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

7. On Pokrovsky, see Konstantin Shteppa, *Russian Historians and the Soviet State* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1962), 47–121, and the introduction to the partly "rehabilitated" re-issue of Pokrovsky, 4 vols (Moscow: Akadem. Nauk); for Shamil, see *Rewriting Russian History*, ed. C. E. Black (New York: Praeger, 1956), 109–12.
8. B. G. Mogilnitsky, "Al'ternativnost' v istorii sovetskogo obshchestva," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 11 (1989):3–16. [*"Alternativity in the History of Soviet Society," Problems of History*]. Mogilnitsky has also published an article "Non-Marxist Historiography of Today: The Evolution of Its Theoretical and Methodological Principles" in a collection *Modern Foreign Non-Marxist Historiography* (Moscow, 1989); this article, translated into English by the author, slightly modified, and with the addition of more discussion of current American historiography, will be published in *CLIO* in 1992.
9. Terence Emmons and others, "Interview with V.P. Danilov," *Slavic Review* (Spring, 1991):150–56.
10. See, for instance, the conference on the 1920s in the USSR, introduced by Robert Tucker, *Slavic Review* (Summer, 1991).
11. J. Arch Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), and *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
12. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), and *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
13. Jerry Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979). See also Hough's *The Soviet Prefects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) and *The Soviet Union and Social Science Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). See the reviews of *How the Soviet Union Is Governed* in *New York Review of Books*, 19 July 1979: 8; and *Political Science Quarterly* 94 (1979):562.
14. Merle Fainsod's virtually standard textbook on Soviet government, of which Hough's book was nominally intended to be a revision, was significantly entitled *How Russia Is Ruled* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963). In his review, Richard Pipes is not slow to point out the discrepancy between the assumptions of the two authors. Pipes, though he sees Bolshevism as intrinsically and inevitably totalitarian, sees it as well as the product of a deep- seated malaise with strong roots in Russia's past: Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York: Scribner's, 1974), and *History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1990).

15. See, for instance, *The Mensheviks*, ed. Leopold Haimson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Ziva Galili, *The Menshevik Leaders in the Russian Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).
16. David Horowitz, *The Free World Colossus* (New York, 1967); but see his *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts about the Sixties* (New York, 1989).
17. So far, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union have opened only the tiniest little crack to foreign scholars, and those of the Communist Party not at all.
18. See, for instance, the February, 1988, issue of *Voprosy filosofii*, dedicated almost entirely to such figures; and subsequent issues.
19. See Gary Brown's brilliant translation of Nietzsche's *Unzeitgemaesse Betrachtungen*, as "History in the Service and Disservice of Life," in *Unmodern Observations*, ed. William Arrowsmith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).
20. Much of the same ground is covered from somewhat different perspectives by Michael Kammen in his introduction to *The Past Before Us*, and by Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 89–103.
21. Carl Becker, *Every Man His Own Historian* (New York: Crofts, 1935); the title essay was originally delivered as a presidential address to the American Historical Association in 1932 (see Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 361–411). Perhaps "despair" is an overstatement: see "What is the Good of History?" in *Selected Letters of Carl Becker*, ed. Michael Kammen (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), xv–xxix.
22. V. N. Voloshinov, *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch*, trans. I. R. Titunik, co-ed. Neal H. Bruss (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. L. Matejka and I. R. Titunik (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).
23. Alexander Yanov, *The Origins of Autocracy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); see also his *The Drama of the Soviet 1960s* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1984).
24. Robert Darnton, "Intellectual and Cultural History," in Kammen, *The Past Before Us*, 327–49; Esther Fein, "Scholars Disconnect the Party Line," *The New York Times*, 26 June 1991, p. A4.
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Part I

Western Historical Thought Considered

2 The American Quest for a New History: Observations on Developments and Trends

Ernst Breisach

In the waning years of the nineteenth century, the general sense of impending radical change also affected historiography in America and Europe. But when, in retrospect, we discern at that point the onset of our present historiographical crisis, we cast the doubts of the late-twentieth century on what was a confident discipline, whose practitioners were sure of their ability to construct a New History attuned to the modern age. In 1890, Frederick Jackson Turner, then a young professor at the University of Wisconsin, called for a New History that went beyond literary artifice and widened its scope to encompass all of life, and he urged historians to study especially the mass of the common people and the economic sphere.[1] Subsequent calls for a change in American historiography came from Earl Wilbur Dow and Edward Eggleston, both using the phrase "New History."[2] In Germany, the explorations in historical theory by Wilhelm Dilthey and the Neo-Kantians, with their aim of overcoming the exclusive claims of the positivist epistemology and of establishing history as a science autonomous of the natural sciences, were conducted full of the excitement of discovery. In the 1890s, many of the volumes of Karl Lamprecht's *Deutsche Geschichte* appeared, a *Kulturgeschichte* intended to be an encompassing and empirical New History.[3] And at the end of that decade, Henri Berr began his quest for a Synthetic History.[4]

As another turn of the century approaches, the mood has become darker and the sense of a historiographical crisis has been with us for some time now. Conservative scholars speak of a discipline adrift, overly specialized, without focus, without commonalty of purpose and a clear sense of the reality of the past, and lacking the compass of a long historiographical tradition. Orthodox Marxist scholars see a bourgeois science inextricably caught up in a web of subjectivity.[5] Other historians simply decry the sheer, limitless specialization which seems to prevent serious attempts at communication and mutual understanding. How did western historiography get from the moment of pure hope, from the declaration by Woodrow Wilson that "we have seen the dawn and the morning hours of a new age in the writing of history, and the morning is now broadening into day,"[6] to the present moment of perceived dusk?

The change resembled not a steady slide downward from a widely shared hope for historiography's successful modernization to the present disillusionment, but rather oscillations between high hopes and commensurately deep disappointments. The cumulative effect has been a weariness that has even marked the present intense and sophisticated theoretical debate and heightened anxiety about the future of historiography.

Today, we speak of this complex, century-old quest for an American New History in terms of a change of paradigms, models of explanation, or just interpretations. What matters most, however, is the awareness that historiography is rarely a purely technical matter. "Doing history" (in Hexter's phrase) is an existential endeavor, in which we are engaged because the temporal structure of human life forces us to do so. In historiography – the mastery of the specious present writ large – individuals and groups strive to connect their memories of the past, their concerns of the present, and their expectations for the future in a manner that makes sense to them in the light of new and cumulative experiences. In their ways, historians try to find a resolution to the perennial tension between relentless, seemingly all-engulfing change (shown in the differences of contexts in time) and the equally perennial search for some structures in human life which yield a sense of continuity, order, and meaning. The sense of continuity has its existential basis (its reality) in the recognition that changes from context to context are never total ruptures, but, rather, show many carry-overs, and in the fact that, as Charles Beard said, "The human mind longs for something more positive than a glance at a swirling tide."[7] The quest for historical truth thus aims to make sense out of ever-changing contexts: a quest that involves the total human person as it strives for knowledge as mastery, both instrumental (in the praxis of life) and theoretical (in the assurance of a meaningful structure of life).

Modern historiographical theories have stressed the long-standing insight that historical analysis and synthesis always occurs in a given context; that historians are immersed in the ongoing process of life. Consequently, the quest for a New History has been directed toward the understanding of all of that life through an encompassing history. But with the submersion of historians and historiography into the dynamics of life, the old doubts about the problem of objectivity were transformed into fundamental doubts about the feasibility of historical truth. These doubts have concerned the ability of historians to transcend the limits of their contexts and construct accounts of past contexts that reflect past reality to a significant measure. Any grasping of the past necessitates a commonalty in the structure of life over the centuries – denying theories built on a radical break between modernity and past centuries – and the ability of historical reason to detach itself sufficiently from the shaping forces of its specific contexts. Indeed, a perennial structure of human life (at the least, a shared range of possibilities and limits) and a measure of autonomy for historical reason have proved necessary to a meaningful dialogue about the past, and essential as a bar to making the past a mere instrument for temporary aims of people in the present. Accordingly, when modern historiographical theories have tried to bypass that complexity by a radical reductionism or other simplifications, life has inevitably corrected them.

The quest for a New History originated in the context of the radical reshaping of turn-of-the-century western Civilization, accomplished by an array of forces that are generally subsumed under the vague but useful term "modernity"? Clearly, the most powerful challenge to the then-current historiography came from the natural sciences, and the world of technology, industrialization, and urbanization they helped create. That challenge demanded that the reconstruction of the past must match the perceived superior accuracy, objectivity, universal validity, comprehensiveness, and, not least, the success of the sciences. Yet such a reconstruction meant abandoning those interpretive elements that in the nineteenth century, despite the triumph of change and contingency over permanency in the historical revolution, had still offered coherence and continuity to historical accounts by relying on such all-transcending elements as God, Ideas, or an objectified Reason. Perceived as timeless by their nature, they had been able, as forces of history, to span the contexts of past, present, and future. Science called on historians to define the world as a self-contained system of immanent processes and forces that had to be explained accordingly.

One of the expectations for a scientific New History, patterned after the natural sciences, was the universality of its concepts, methods, and interpretations. For a short time, the "scientific" historiographies – with their positivistically conceived objectivism – in various countries would deliver a taste of the desired universality. However, for most of the period since 1890, different cultural and national contexts have set the accents of inquiry, dug the channels in which deliberations moved, and shaped the expectations for answers. The quest for a New History has reflected the multifaceted forms of human life, particularly those that Henri Berr called the *differences nationales irreductibles*.[8] Only since the 1960s has the intensified internationalization of the historiographies of North America, England, and most of Europe reawakened thoughts of universality.

My observations yield to that insight by discussing the complexity of the modern historiographical crisis and the trends for the future, not in the abstract but on the basis of one national tradition. Since the German and French developments have so far received ample consideration, I choose to deal with American developments, which, in retrospectives on the historiographical crisis, have received relatively little attention. This is a neglect difficult to understand, since in American life modernization certainly has run its course rapidly and with remarkable, transforming consequences for historiography. I shall cast my remarks in the form of observations, disclaiming thereby comprehensiveness, and present a general discussion with few specific references to individual historians, so as to avoid the appearance of *ad hominem* polemics.

The turn-of-the-century calls for a New History were sounded at a time when many historians were convinced that they already had accomplished the transition to the modern age. The American Scientific historians, contemporaries of the modern French *erudits* and the German Neo-Rankians, never ceased to cite their vanquishing of the so-called literary histories of George Bancroft, Francis Parkman, and others, as the turning point in historiography.[9] Like their European counterparts, American Scientific historians rested their claim to have accomplished historiography's transition to modernity, primarily, if not solely, on the use of "the" scientific method. That method, with its investigators as pure observers detaching their critical reason nearly completely from their life-contexts, held out the promise of fulfilling the perennial quest after a flawless reconstruction of the past. With the ideal of pure objectivity at its core, the historical method was thought to be just as empirical and truth-producing as that of the natural sciences. The investigator's reason enabled the historian, not to glance at eternal verities but to reconstruct the past from "remainders" – i.e., facts critically ascertained from documents. In that sense, the method would provide the Archimedean fulcrum for the leverage of historical truth. It did not matter that the actual methodology was a melange of elements drawn from Ranke's *Geschichtswissenschaft*, Comte's empiricism, and a vaguely perceived Darwinism. In practice the scientific status of historiography was buttressed by impressive research results and by Scientific History's role in the swift and successful professionalization of American historiography.

Yet, American Scientific history's claim that it reconstructed past life fully, found its first contradiction when the choice of sources – mostly documents connected with matters of government, diplomacy, and war –

limited the range of the subject matter dealt with. A second contradiction came in the excessive reliance of Scientific historians on the actions of individuals as decisive forces, although some historians found that tendency remediable through the writing of institutional history. However, the crucial limitation of Scientific history's potential derived from the reduction of the immensely complex process of the reconstitution of past contexts (synthesis) to an accumulation of facts. Historians basically would watch, rather than accomplish, the reconstruction of past contexts. The process of synthesis – including its core, interpretation – became a mere function of a scientifically pure analysis. In all of that, there was a stark contradiction between the assertion of a powerful, active reason in historical analysis and of a passive one in synthesis. The reconciliation of past, present, and anticipations for the future would pose no fundamental problems, only test human patience.

Pressure for changes in Scientific history originated not so much in any perceived flaws in the positivist epistemology, but in the diminishing tolerance for the prescribed wait. Even Scientific historians transgressed: with their tacit assumption that their future knowledge of the American past would mirror their present expectation that history would follow a course toward the perfection of liberal democracy. Henry Adams pointed out that such an assumption was born not of the scientific spirit but of tradition and hope.[10] The intellectual climate of the period also entered when the investigative assumptions of Scientific historians were marked by contemporary physics's view of the world as composed of clearly delimited, substantial entities that stood in repetitive relationships to each other, and by biology's view of the world as evolutionary (contradictions between the two views notwithstanding). And, finally, the Scientific historians acknowledged the need for hypotheses as temporary "bridges" to that distant day of the fullness of facts, when they brought forth interpretations of early American history in keeping with Germanist and Imperial theses.

Yet, despite its theoretical tensions and inconsistencies, the position of Scientific history remained strong. That showed, when, in 1903, Fred Morrow Fling made a serious attempt to acquaint American historians with the endeavors by contemporary German and French scholars to establish a historical science that recognized more fully the historian's immersion in a specific context, trying as he did so to avoid both the destruction of the truth-claims of historiography and the limitations of a positivistic historical science. The attempt evoked no response.[11]

The scholarly countercurrent against Scientific History took a direction quite different from the modernist tendencies in Germany and, to some degree, in France. The American countercurrent, Progressive history, turned out not to be directed at Scientific history's positivist epistemology but at its unsatisfactory understanding of synthesis. That choice carried the marks of the new contemporary context, the optimistic and bustling Progressive Era, which favored the public use of historiography, although not what seemed mere theory. The real problem would not be how to analyze the past scientifically, but how to recast in scientific form the traditional interpretation of history as progress. In that context, American Progressive historians challenged the Scientific historians' contention that synthesis could only come after the well-nigh complete collection of the facts. Instead, they maintained that the proper synthesis (revealing progress) could already be established conclusively from the available facts. In doing so, they quietly accepted, if not the positivist epistemology of the Scientific historians, at least many of its results: an acceptance that would insulate American historiography from the epistemological debates of Europe and their troubling uncertainties. For the time being, everything seemed to be in perfect harmony: the secure remainders of the past (the facts) were linked together according to an equally secure order that was ascertained from these very facts and the American tradition.

However, the neglect of epistemology introduced a profound tension into Progressive history. The Progressive historians' pragmatic concept of reason as strictly an instrument of life, excluded reason's detachment from life. But exactly that detachment was employed in the positivist production of the facts on which Progressive historians relied. That contradiction was temporarily alleviated, but not resolved, when the Progressive historians redefined objectivity. They denied that it meant reason's detachment from the historian's context, and saw it as reason's conforming to the right elements in that context by "thinking along" the flow of progress. Yet this new objectivity made critical analysis subsidiary to interpretation and synthesis, and thus incapable of critically analyzing progress. But all along, the facts produced by the positivist epistemology – with its objectivity understood as detachment of reason from the context – remained a part of Progressive history. In the 1920s, doubts about historians as even temporarily "context-free" analysts emerged, along with concerns about the epistemology itself. These doubts and concerns would have devastating consequences. Only Becker pointed out the problem earlier but was ignored.

Over this epistemological fault-line, Progressive historians built their version of the American New History. They concentrated on the writing of an encompassing history with progress as the central force. The latter reduced the complexity of the task – with its need to understand or explain life in all of its aspects, periods, and places – to manageable proportions. It did not matter that the dynamic forces that made for progress remained only broadly described. Robinson discerned in the past a constantly increasing power of human rationality, while Beard ascribed all power to the steady growth in the mastery of the material world, particularly manifest in industrialization. Both rationality and industrialization were not seen as mere concepts designed by scholars for cognition but as forces of objective reality that forced all of human life to adjust to their steady increase in strength.

It mattered that Progressive historians knew the shape of the future: a rational, efficient, technologically sophisticated, industrial, planned, and co-operative society. That future, projected "backward," gave a clear structure to the multitudinous phenomena of life. Lacking such a scheme, previous historicist attempts at creating an encompassing history had produced sprawling and primarily descriptive accounts, with each of several past contexts having its own structure. And the new concept of progress seemed to conform to the injunction against reliance on transcendent forces. Yet, while this concept appeared to be genuinely empirical and to affirm incessant change (what with progress's presence in history since the earliest periods), it was, in a paradoxical way, timeless and, hence, transcended empirical reality.

But Progressive history's success in producing an all-encompassing history came at a high price. Like all meta-histories, it relied on a considerable reductionism. Historiographical interest concentrated on those phenomena in the contexts of the past that furthered, or at least adapted to, progress, while other segments of life were seen as of little consequence to the dynamics of history, and became mere epiphenomena. Accounts of the latter were irrelevant, since their already secondary meaning and efficacy in past contexts had now vanished, together with their contexts. A historicism aiming at the full understanding of each period on its own terms was of no value. Therefore, the scope of the historian's work could be markedly restricted without fear of serious consequences. In redefining what "encompassing" meant, Progressive historians had not chosen the guidance of William James's pragmatism, wide open to all the manifestations of the world, but Dewey's instrumentalism, restricting interest and approval to those of life's phenomena which enhanced progress as defined.

Then, in 1913, in an attempt to be analytically more precise about history's dynamics, Beard gave the concept of economic interests and their conflicts a key role. It offered Beard a rare opportunity to address theoretical problems because the new concept introduced considerable tensions into his interpretive model. Industrialization had a direction clearly in accord with Beard's definition of progress (since every increase in industrialization enhanced its assumed beneficent impact on society) but economic interests did not. As psychological forces, shaped by economic structures, they offered empirical explanations for conflicts in history but had no necessary connection with progress. Even in Beard's work, they were often forces that hindered rather than supported progress. Undaunted, Beard made economic interests a second primary force of life, turning all ideas and actions into expressions of economic interests. With the reduction of much of history to a perennial conflict between those who possess economic power (business) and those who do not (the people), Progressive history was able to deliver ready explanations of even complex problems. Yet, a determinism in terms of economic interests put in doubt Beard's very ideal: a future society free of fundamental economic conflict. And the economic interpretation of history in terms of inescapable economic interests contradicted the concept of the masses as the "pure" agent and beneficiary of progress. They were, by implication, also possessed of economic interests, unless declared to be exempt from history's verdict. The problem grew worse when the masses turned out to be the major force of inertia.

Insufficiently grounded in theory, Progressive history, while enjoying considerable public success in the 1920s, eventually faced such changes in American life and in western thought as soon proved destructive to it. In the First World War, science and technology, viewed by Progressive historians as intrinsically beneficial, had become instruments of devastation, and in the post-war world all Progressive expectations were contradicted in structure and spirit. Moreover, changes in the original role-model, the natural sciences – especially the emergence of the relativity theory and the indeterminacy principle in modern physics – eroded the claims for the positivistic method of fact-finding as the one most clearly reflecting the methods and theory of the natural sciences. Those who drew conclusions for historical theory from the New Physics, saw historians no longer as neutral observers but as inextricably guided by their life-contexts in their research and interpretations.

By the early 1930s, Becker and Beard (Robinson having ended his scholarly career by then), having abandoned all traces of the positivistic epistemology, searched for a different New History. Becker, whose always weak faith in progress as a historical force had collapsed completely after the War, began to speak of historiography as the production of socially useful myths, while Beard, declaring "objectivism" to be a "Noble Dream" and abandoning progress as a feature of objective reality, based his interpretation of history as progress on an act of faith.[12] With the collapse of the claim that progress could be ascertained objectively (even in the Progressive vein), Progressive history, as an experiment in modern historiography, built on the primacy of synthesis, was left without a sufficient theoretical foundation. Past reality and historical interpretation were no longer cognitively connected.

By 1935, the era of theoretical confidence in American historiography was ending. The American context, its public and scholarly traditions dominated by the concept of progress and a clear role for the America nation in it, would never again be so easily combined with the work and conclusions of critical reason. For about three decades, first the Second World War and then the post-war status of the United States held in check the uncertainties usually connected with such breaks in historiographical development. During that period the so-called Consensus history, fitting well in the context of America's victory and the super-power struggle with the Soviet Union, rejected Progressive history's central tenets: the negation of much of the past in the interest of a perceived future, the equating of tradition with inertia, the predominance of economic and social conflict, and the reduction of thought to an instrument in the adjustment to material progress. On their part, Consensus historians ended up with an overemphasis on unity and continuity that laid their interpretation open to rectification.

After 1965, this rectification came through the Radical or New Left historians. They relied essentially on a radicalization of Progressive history's conflict model, an admixture of Marxist and Freudian thought, with a heavy emphasis on the discontinuity between past and future. The result was a stark negativism towards most of the American past, resulting once more from using an idealized future as the standard of judgment. As for the relationship between America's past, present, and future, which Consensus historians had viewed as an organic unity, Radical historians saw it as a combination of a mostly objectionable past, a conflict-rich present, and a completely different, much better future. But both types of historiography, diametrically opposed to each other, were continuations of a historiography which accentuated synthesis over the intricacies of analysis (epistemology). They also were still part of that American historiography which found in the nation the overriding frame of reference.

Then, the great turn in American historiography occurred. American historiography, so far an endeavor marked by steady but orderly change and a broad agreement on a national frame of reference, became an increasingly turbulent experiment with many currents and cross-currents. This change was carried out in a much less self-contained nation, whose historical sense was ever less securely directed by the traditional guides of progress and exceptionalism, and one which saw a wavering in the once-sturdy reliance on positivist fact-finding. This holds true even though the majority of practicing American historians remained to a significant degree faithful to traditional interpretations and a positivistic epistemology of some sort. But among an increasing number of scholars, who devoted their attention to the questions of how to write history in a modern manner and how to secure historical truth so as to regain a sense of stability for historical accounts, uncertainties grew at the same rate as suggested solutions came and went in rapid succession. In a characteristic shift, even the concept of the nation, so far the steadying factor in American historiography, lost ground to the broader concept of a society in which the nation appeared as one social context among many others. In this situation, it became significant that the ever more closely interconnected world facilitated a strong influx of European historiographical ideas. While that influx widened the range of options in historical theory, it also made American historiography far more complex. In this stage of turmoil, shouts of "Eureka" over theoretical discoveries, some substantial, others marginal in value, mingled readily with voices of disillusionment with historiographical developments that moved rapidly but lacked a discernible direction. An enumeration of the innovations since 1965 would produce a long and unenlightening inventory; a few general observations on trends will do better.

Just as in European historiography, the crisis of American historiography began as one of positivism. Some historians, at least in theory if not always in practice, were willing to abandon what Beard still had called the "Noble Dream" but now came to be known derisively as "objectivism."[13] They denied that historians were able to detach themselves from their life-contexts to a degree that would ensure accounts of the past not shaped irretrievably by the mental world of the present. A radical reassessment of historiography's core-problem was needed: what was the exact role of the historian's critical reason in elucidating past contexts and their connections with those of the present? In an intellectual climate of disillusionment with the exaggerated claims of the past for the autonomy of reason from the historian's life-context, theoreticians and some practitioners now lifted the historians' dependence on their life-contexts into the lofty place held previously by the objectivity defined as complete detachment, endowing it with the same exclusive claims to being the path to historical truth. Beginning with the early 1960s, the age of a radical emphasis on context unfolded in the United States. In an ironic reversal, the element that formerly had been seen as the obstacle to a truly scientific historiography was now given honored status. At issue in this turn would be the extent of, and manner in which, the historian's life-context determined inquiry and accounts.

Much positivist strength remained in American historiography, and some attempts were made to defy the new contextual trend by developing the positivist tradition further. These efforts found an unfavorable intellectual climate, and not only in epistemology. The generally reduced expectation for science to master the world had also lowered the once-high expectations for the possibility of a scientific historiography in the positivist manner. According to the Covering Law theory, with its neo-positivist base, historians were to find the permanent patterns of human life and express them in laws of the "if . . . then" variety. Once more, the price was a reduction of synthesis to a function of analysis; but once again the element of interpretation intruded into analysis in the historian's assumptions about the structure of the world they wished to explain – a world with repetitive patterns and, hence, a predictable order. Indeed, the problem of the authority of historical truth was to be solved at the cost of stripping historiography of most of the actual context of human life as irrelevant to predictability and cognition.

The cliometricians, in their attempt to escape the seeming arbitrariness of interpretation, assumed the quantifiability of life's essential phenomena. They revised Scientific history by lessening the emphasis on reason's act of detachment as they relied on sophisticated research procedures and shifted the burden of interpretation away from the self-fitting of the facts to the presumed mathematical structure of life. Most of the cliometricians eventually understood that they illuminated aspects of life, not life itself. Fortuitously, they dealt with those aspects the modern temper favored: the phenomena in which an individual's conscious choices became submerged in collective trends.

The Covering Law Model and Cliometrics shared a basic contradiction. They affirmed reason's ability to transcend its immediate historical context in the search for abstract and universal patterns, while, at the same time, they defined the context as a highly deterministic world: a determinism which denied much, if not all, of reason's potential for transcending that context in the praxis of explaining and living life.

The revival of "objectivism" did not dominate the American quest for a New History that continued to aim at an encompassing history and a method of truth-finding in an appropriately modern manner. This time, historians had to do without the Scientific historians' positivist conception of reason detached from context, as well as without the Progressive historians' presumed harmony between critical reason and objective reality; they had to manage with a reason firmly embedded in the complex totality of life's contexts. Accordingly, work began to find and define those contexts which structure human life and within which historians have to perform their task.

Soon the innovators realized that the contexts and subcontexts multiplied in step with the increasing sophistication of their inquiries. The new meta-context of the social historians, "society," resembled those Russian dolls which contain ever more and smaller dolls. Despite the complexity of their endeavors, historians produced a vast amount of work that has amplified our knowledge of the social dimension of life. But the recognition of the role of the context in human life and historical inquiry offered the same temptation of oversimplification that previously had led Scientific historians to speak of complete scholarly detachment. This time, the lure of the all-powerful context as a quick road to historical truth proved a mighty tempter. The more ambitious some innovators grew in the scope of their generalizations about human life, the greater the need to simplify and streamline the explanatory schemes became. They ended up stipulating either one relatively stable basic structure or one never-ceasing dynamic force as the organizing principle for both the reality and the accounts of the past. Such a stabilization of historical theory through one dominant structure or force – be it economic interests, libido, social status-seeking, power-seeking, or others – carried its price. Historians paid it by the acceptance of deterministic schemes that reduced all phenomena to manifestations of human life's discovered "base," even those that counteracted reality vainly. Such contexts, defined as rigidly controlled by structures and forces, by necessity engulfed the historian's reason, denying it any significant potential to transcend its contexts through critical work. Indeed, such transcendence was superfluous in reductionist theories, because the basic answers, true for all contexts of life, were already known. To substantiate and amplify them constituted proper reasoning, while to contradict them meant improper reasoning.

Whether proponents of race, gender, and class will yield to the temptation to transform these concepts from differentiations between human beings of import to thought and action, into verbal symbols for forces that determine everything by their ubiquity and exclusive efficacy, is not yet clear. With class having evoked little resonance in American historiography, race and gender have emerged as the important concepts. Both came into prominence in the course of an actual social struggle and not through conceptual discussions. The fervor of the civil rights struggle gave them a momentum that was not easily channeled into the confines of historical analysis. But as the integration of minorities and women into American society proceeds, the most likely and promising avenue guides the concepts of race and gender into the array of long-standing concepts that historians will have to heed in giving a proper account of American history. The other avenue, of claiming too much explanatory power for the two concepts, would be that blind alley at the end of which the reality of life performs the needed correction.

Social histories of a deterministic nature pose an additional threat to the proper balance between a sufficiently powerful critical reason and given life-contexts, by their view of history as a perennial struggle for power. They reduce historical inquiry to a dualistic contest between those who are clearly right and those who are equally clearly wrong, and have interpreted historiography not so much as a valiant attempt by critical reason to ascertain order and meaning, but as an endeavor to impose it on behalf of competing groups. Within such a view, the terms "continuity" and "change" no longer represent dimensions of human life but are turned into code words for ideological positions in a power struggle. The use of historiography by those "in tune" with the true structure or trend of history is legitimate, while such use by those not "in tune" is misguided or deceptive. It cannot be otherwise, since any autonomy of human reason from its context has been declared to be impossible.

Traces of that power-struggle model show in the labeling of past historiographical interpretations as rationalizations for established groups. For example, the Scientific history of the early 1900s has been labeled a "conservative" movement of primarily eastern-establishment historians. While that view certainly pointed out one aspect of that school of historiography, it overlooked the whole logic of historiographical development which brought Scientific history about and neglected the actual, much more complex mechanism that links historiography to the phenomenon of power. Experience shows that, initially, historiographical innovations have been the result of criticisms of existing views as insufficient to account properly for the fullness of life. Only after innovations have become accepted and then institutionalized as schools of thought, have power and thought usually been mixed to the detriment of proper inquiry. But that has been a characteristic of all historical "establishments" regardless of social group and political persuasion.

In the light of the horrendous ideological struggles of the century, historians and philosophers have earnestly searched for a remedy to the problem of the linkage between historiography and power which, at its core, is once more that of the sufficient autonomy of the inquirer's reason from the life-context. Some have simply rejoiced in the welter of historical interpretations, and have seen in such a pluralism the proper democratic response to the requirements of our age. Pluralism would make superfluous the now much-feared "dominant" historical account and, thus, safeguard against a historiography maintained by institutional power. But neither the personal nor the collective quest for an ordered human life can be satisfied by an ideal that is little more than an attractively done-up historiographical agnosticism. Even a democratic nation cannot be maintained by the declared absence of any truth about the past. Others have tried to be more positive: their works have been characterized by the emphasis on dialogue, communities of inquiring scholars, or historiography as communicative action. Yet, much as one delights in the spirit of such an enterprise, one doubts some of its logic. If its accent is on the total exclusion of power, conceived here as the ability to influence the action and thoughts of others, the suspicion of utopian hopes arises. At the very least, the power of persuasion remains part and parcel of a dialogue. Is there a dialogue that aims at the historical truth and, thus, implicitly affirms the exclusiveness which is the mark of truth that is immune to the temptation of exercising power on behalf of the new truth? Does the idea of historiography as a dialogue free of the coercive powers of life not constitute a new version of reason's detachment from the context of life, only this time to be realized, not by the will to be scientific, but to be tolerant?

It seems that an age that has come to identify the historian's context as the key element in historiographical discussions and is concerned about the implications of power for the integrity of historiographical work, should see the best safeguard for that integrity not in renewed attempts to deny that context's importance but in the rejection of theories that disallow virtually all potential for the human reason to transcend the context. That approach holds the best assurance for properly comprehending human life and safeguarding history's status as a *wissenschaftliche* discipline.[14] It has been generally overlooked that the modern emphasis on the historian's life-context has offered, not only the temptation for deterministic reductionisms, but also the positive opportunity for a linkage between historical inquiry and a democratic normative structure. Once it is understood that a properly modern historiography must strive for a balance between the claims of critical reason and its life-context, historians must conduct their inquiries in the framework of a new objectivity. The old concept of objectivity had seen the autonomy of the historian's reason from the context as a matter of conscience and will. In the modern version of objectivity, acts of conscience and will would still be required, but would be joined by acts of affirmation of those social and political systems that grant the historian's reason a degree of autonomy sufficient to make it a creative force in inquiry and life. Such a recognition of the normative aspect of modern historical inquiry is not at all so unique. While eschewing norms of an ethical nature, even the new social history uses concepts and ideas – such as emancipation, oppression, and the need to include the common people into historiography – that only make sense in the traditional normative framework of equality and justice. The new linkage of objectivity to substance remains at a safe distance from the Scientific and Progressive historians' excessive and naive faith in the automatic identity of science and democracy. It has a form properly chastened by the experiences of a century filled with achievements and tragedies. On this basis, an adequately modern reconciliation of past, present, and expectations for the future becomes feasible.

More recently, the American search for a historiography in a properly modern manner has been marked by the so-called linguistic turn. That turn has not been a "return of literature," nor has it "plunged historical studies into an extended epistemological crisis."[15] Rather, some historians who took most seriously the doubts that any empirical reconstruction of the past was possible, began to focus attention on language and texts. For a short time, the shift seemed to lessen the burden imposed on historians by the perennial question about the exact linkage of thought and reality. One could downplay language's ambivalence in its relation to reality by stressing a history of meanings – their production, maintenance, and transmission – without raising the issue of "why" that would lead beyond linguistic structures to the reality of life. Thus, to many advocates of the linguistic turn, the linguistic conception of historiography seemed to offer an escape from the confines of referential realism. In contrast to tendencies in the new social history, meanings were no longer epiphenomena prompted by cultural conditions, but constituted the primary, or even only, manifestations of past human reality in texts or discourses. That this approach proved particularly suited to intellectual history has been seen by its proponents as a temporary limitation. However, the old questions about the linkage between life as lived and life as told could not be shelved and returned as the question of the linkage of text or discourse to reality. As for answers, they have ranged over a wide spectrum from those who use texts as points of access to reality – that is, as the sources for reconstruction of past contexts – to those who view texts as reality itself. But all of them have had to deal with the status of reason in the linguistically defined context.

Scholars of the first group, although their specific interpretations differ, have treated texts as the results of the creative work of authors, who embedded in them intentions, and thus created meanings as links to a specific order of reality. They understood that the linguistic forms were not neutral elements in past historical discourses (or texts) or in the present historiographical inquiry. The narrativists were aware of that complexity when they studied how, in the process of emplotment, temporal structures of life were translated into the structure of the texts, and how figurative language was used to refer to the world's reality. Here, the linguistic elements of life assumed a role by far exceeding the one of a neutral medium assigned to them in earlier years. The narrative was not, as various groups of "scientific" historians had thought, an empty form into which facts or fiction could be poured at will. But what exactly its link to reality was, has remained a problem of daunting proportions. Whether the narrative represented a meta-code, ontologically anchored and, hence, shared by all human beings, through which diverse experiences were ordered into intelligible form or a form invented ad hoc for producing the illusion of meaning and continuity, has remained unresolved. Most narrativist theories of history settled in the logically rather hazy territory between the extremes.

Equally motivated by the perceived impossibility of a traditional empirical reconstruction of the past, since all inquiries are already begun in a linguistically manifested conceptual order, were the so-called contextualists who have used texts as the access points to reconstructing past conceptual contexts. They have done so through discerning from the text the original intentions and the linguistic world of the author. That seemed a surer guide for placing a text into its proper context than the analysis of the social, political, and economic promptings experienced by the author. This approach has granted much autonomy to rational processes, however constrained they might be by the languages used in discourses and, hence, has worked best in the analysis of "thoughtful" texts; it has therefore made deep inroads into intellectual history now understood as a "history of discourse." The approach has relied on critical reason in three ways. First, in transcending the linguistically defined context of the inquiring historian so as to understand the intentions of past authors and their languages or modes of discourse. Second, by preserving the construction of the text as a conscious act by a historical agent. Third, by acknowledging, albeit indirectly, critical reason as the link between the historian and past reality. In this manner, the contextualists placed themselves at a safe distance from empiricism but did not cut themselves off from the life beyond the texts. Whether the limitation of rational inquiry to texts will not also limit linguistic contextualism to intellectual history, only the future will show.

By contrast, serious doubts can be and have been voiced about the relevance of other versions of the linguistic turn that have made the linguistic contexts into escapeless structures. Fearing the potential for domination inherent in narratives and theories or despairing of ever penetrating to past reality, these scholars have in various ways draped the mantle of reality around texts. Ironically, some of the linguistic structures, such as Foucault's "dialogues," have turned out to be every bit as oppressive as the old empirical models. The "hermeneutical circle," enveloping the historians into an inescapable linguistic web, has offered only a milder version of confinement for historical inquiry. The perceived impossibility of any references to the reality of life that do not already contain meanings impressed upon them by language has been equated with the impossibility for historians to go beyond the confines of language as given.

The most recent examples have been offered by the so-called postmodernists or deconstructionists, who have entered historical theory from literary criticism by maintaining that their methods apply to all texts, including historical ones. They have offered solutions to many perennial problems of historiography by negating the problems themselves. That has meant to discard all stable structures left in linguistic explanations: language as a system, fixed meanings to words, and narratives as perceived wholes. Words, freed from the contexts of texts, were now able to create free plays of signifiers, none of them referring to the actual past. The world of the deconstructionist inquiry has been relieved of the author and authorial intentions, creating one in which texts themselves are the reality. As the texts "dialogue" with each other, the critic watches for the kaleidoscopic configurations of words, ascertaining "what is not there," "is absent," or "is repressed." Yet these phrases betray (albeit in a negative way) the silent presence of the reality of life so shunned by the deconstructionists. And so do the contortions needed to account for qualitative distinctions between texts (great and not so great). All the discussions of "complexity," "denseness for reading," and other such terms coyly point toward the shunned "referent" (life) without acknowledging it. Deconstructionists have celebrated this abolition of all traditional historiographical problems, including obviously that of the relationship between critical reason and life-context, as an emancipation. The residual reality of texts as kaleidoscopic arrangements of words that is minuscule and untouched by the great human achievements and sufferings of the centuries. All reminders of the untidy world of human life can here be brushed off as nostalgic longings.

The Scientific historians, who stood at the beginning of the American quest for a New History, had indeed been theoretically simplistic. In contrast to them, some historians have proudly spoken of a triumph of theory in recent decades. But such a triumph, if actual, is as much reason for concern as for jubilation, as much a sign of a deep uncertainty as it is a promise of impending solutions to some of the important historiographical problems. Today, an uneasiness prevails because the century-old quest for a New History has not yet produced a historiography that has satisfied the multi-faceted historical sense of the modern period, with its rapid changes and propensity for radical doubts. The search for the one fail-safe method or the one proper, explanatory contextual order that would accomplish the adjustment of historiography to modernity, has been inconclusive. Actually, the idea that one new twist in interpretive or epistemological techniques would make it possible for us to steal the "keys from the girdle of time"[16] with which to open all doors, has been most corrosive and, if maintained, will prolong the historiographical crisis indefinitely. A disillusionment, different from the normal disappointment over the inevitable limitations of all new approaches, will follow every historiographical innovation in method, view, specialization, or dynamic force as long as they remain linked to the utopian hopes evoked by oversimplifications. The historian will resemble more and more Sisyphus without his stubborn will and hope.

A remedy offers itself in the realization that attempts to adjust historiography to modernity by one proper theoretical innovation are flawed in their underlying assumption of a sharp discontinuity between the present and the past. In a curious way, many New Histories, while moving vigorously to fulfill the mandate to be encompassing in their accounts, have been quite exclusive and narrow in their theoretical tenets. Among them has been the stipulation of rigid orders of importance for critical reason and life-contexts in which one was always neglected in favor of the other. Life, however, knows only the complex, intermixed configurations of both, in which the relative importance of one over the other changes often and rapidly but where both play a significant role. And while historians for the sake of comprehension can deliberately deal with the past in its separate aspects and its segments of time and place, the theory of history must, by its nature, be cognizant of all of life. Hence, scholars must not reduce the life to be comprehended to one dominant aspect, be it economic, linguistic, or other, and then make exclusive claims for methods and interpretations tailored to their simplified view of life.

The ultimate challenge and arbiter of historical truth remains the human life as lived. That life and the historiographies derived from it did not begin with modernity. Much like life, historiography has been, and must remain, a matter of cumulative insights. What past historians did is partially outdated, gone with the past contexts, but also partially still relevant in method and substance. Thus, American Scientific historians were naive in their overestimation of how detached historians could be, but the ideal of detachment as the rational transcendence of the given context is both older and still necessary. Progressive historians cherished a concept of progress that envisaged a life without shadows, a total conquest of the world of imperfection by reason and technical mastery, yet the idea and the reality of progress need not have died with them. The same will eventually be said about some insights of the new methods and the accounts they produce.

Historians need not, and must not, strive for a *tabula rasa* on which to design ever-new theoretical innovations: an insight that should be easy to understand in a period so enamored by context. The antidote to this – and to the related misconception that our period is utterly unique and hence requires the discovery of a totally new and ultimate method or interpretation – is a modern historiography that will be as complex as we have learned, by now, that life is. In such a history, continuity will once more be stressed, based on a recognition of a common human experience that may not yield timeless values and ideas, but structures and patterns of human life which recur over the ages, not in the form of simplistic laws, but sufficiently clear to instruct us about the possibilities and limits of human life.

Historiography can be all of that if it combines, creatively, the fascinating modern insights into formerly ignored aspects of human life, the intricate role of language and narration, and the deepened relationship of "historians with their context," with some of the conclusions of past historians. But such a historiography also must deny itself simplistic reductionisms of all kinds and affirm the potential of critical reason to transcend the limits of any context. A historiography of experience, not of the simple positivistic empiricism but one rarified in the furnace of a century of turbulent life and theoretical inquiry, would restore the lost balance between innovation and tradition, and between the limitations imposed on historical inquiries by the contexts of life and the potential of critical reason to transcend those contexts. It alone offers the prospect of a historiography beyond utopian hopes and the disillusionment that follows them.

Notes

1. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of History," *Wisconsin Journal of Education* 21 (October 1891):230–40, and 21 (November 1891):253–56.
2. Earl Wilbur Dow, "Features of a New History: Apropos of Lamprecht's *'Deutsche Geschichte',*" *American Historical Review* 3 (October 1898–July 1899):431–48; and Edward Eggleston, "The New History," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1900* (Washington, D.C., 1901), 35–47.
3. Karl Lamprecht, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 12 vols (Leipzig, 1891–1909).
4. He began publishing the *Revue de Synthèse Historique* in 1900.
5. Among others see Gertrud Himmelfarb, *The New History and the Old* (Cambridge, 1987), and B. G. Mogilnitsky, "Some Tendencies in the

Development of Contemporary Bourgeois Historical Thought," in the present volume.

6. Woodrow Wilson, "The Variety and Unity of History," *Congress of Arts and Sciences*, ed. Howard J. Rogers, 7 vols (Boston, 1906), 2:3.
7. Charles A. Beard, *Cross-Currents in Europe Today* (Boston, 1922), 263.
8. Henri Berr, *La Synthèse en Histoire* (Paris, 1911), viii.
9. In order to make clear that I refer to the American version of scientific historiography, I have capitalized the word "Scientific" when appropriate.
10. Henry Adams, "The Tendency of History," *Annual Report of the AHA for the Year of 1894* (Washington, D.C., 1895), 17–23.
11. Edward Morrow Fling, "Historical Synthesis," *American Historical Review* 9 (October 1903):1–22. While it is impossible to prove, Carl Becker's later doubts about positivism may well have had some link to this article.
12. Charles A. Beard, "That Noble Dream," *American Historical Review* 41 (October, 1955):74–87.
13. See Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge and New York, 1988), for a recent work in that vein.
14. I deliberately use the German term since the English word "scientific" evokes immediately the suspicion of positivism, and I intend only to denote the systematic, open, and verifiable search for a modern truth about the past.
15. David Harlan, "Intellectual History and the Return to Literature," *American Historical Review* 94 (June 1989):581.
16. The phrase was used by William B. Yeats, referring to poets, in *Essay and Introductions* (New York, 1961), 253.

3 Some Tendencies in the Development of Contemporary Bourgeois Historical Thought[1]

B. G. Mogilnitsky

Soviet historians have written revealingly of the ideological-theoretical foundations of contemporary bourgeois historical thought, and its essential lines and fundamental currents have been characterized, including the several of its most significant historiographical manifestations examined in detail. And yet, the theoretical-methodological strivings of contemporary bourgeois historiography confront its investigators with new questions, the answer to which requires that the tendencies of its development be closely followed. Only by discovering these tendencies, revealing their genuine scholarly meaning and their ideological direction, can one establish the laws of development of contemporary bourgeois historical scholarship.

At least two circumstances seriously hinder the resolution of this task. One of them is the incompleteness of the object of study itself, the absence of any significant temporal distance between it and the investigator. Long ago, Friedrich Engels stressed that "in making judgments about the events and linkages of events of history still current, one will never arrive at the ultimate economic causes." He also added, however, that the inevitability of mistakes "prevents nobody from writing the history of current events."[2] This is clearly relevant to the study of the intellectual life of contemporary society, where it is even more difficult to detect the ultimate causes of the changes taking place. These very changes are difficult to appraise in view of the complexity of differentiating short-term, rapidly changing manifestations from long-term tendencies that for a more-or-less prolonged period determine the development of the intellectual life of capitalist society. Behind the kaleidoscopic flicker of names, works, points of view, it is difficult to discern the prevailing tendencies that determine the shape of contemporary bourgeois historiography, to say nothing of their social-class origins. Moreover, in spite of the long-term internationalization of bourgeois historical thought, well-known and occasionally even essential differences among national historiographies still exist, including some in the ideological-theoretic sphere. Of course this hinders even further the formulation of generalizations on contemporary bourgeois historiography as a whole.

The present essay makes an attempt to examine the contemporary condition of bourgeois historical thought from the point of view of its understanding of the nature and tasks of historical depiction. It proposes that in the interpretation of precisely these problems essential changes took place in the '70s and beginning of the '80s that allow us to speak of a definite tendency with a notable effect on the overall shape of bourgeois historiography.

The development of historical scholarship, as of all forms of the intellectual life of contemporary society, takes place under the powerful influence of the global processes current in our present world. The sharpening struggle of two social systems and the growing threat of a nuclear catastrophe, the scientific-technical revolution, and the ecological crisis – without taking such factors into account, that determine the shape of the contemporary world, one cannot thoroughly understand even the greatest manifestations of its intellectual life. This is completely relevant to contemporary bourgeois historiography as well. The factors cited above determine the atmosphere in which it develops and its overall ideological mood, which on the whole is quite pessimistic.

It is not by chance that the author of a survey of West German historico-theoretical literature, E. Weymar, directly links the dominant tendencies in the west that are trying to comprehend contemporary and future mankind with the "sense that prevails in broad circles . . . of an oncoming catastrophe."[3] Only such a feeling could have brought into being P. Berglar's book, suffused as it is with a profound conviction that a hellish catastrophe threatens the world, a catastrophe that could only be averted by an ethical (religious) renaissance. The author pounces on the idea of progress as a "chimera"; and even simple axiomatic judgments – for example, the notion that the raising of the technological level of civilization, or that the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of life, indicates a rising level of the human condition – he qualifies as "one of our numerous schizophrenic modes of behavior."[4]

Berglar's book, written from the point of view of a militant theologian who does not accept the contemporary situation for precisely the reason that it seems a departure from "God's plan," would scarcely have deserved attention were it not for its preface written by the venerable West German historian Th. Schieder – a preface in which he essentially declares his solidarity with the book's basic positions. Expounding on the author's conception, and especially emphasizing his conviction of God's presence in the entire course of history, Schieder concludes, "Here one cannot argue. We can only admire the courage and conviction with which he makes his case."[5] Thus contemporary bourgeois historical thought joins hands with outright fideism and obscurantism.

This fact is not in itself anything new. As is well known, V. I. Lenin at the very beginning of the century substantiated its link to idealistic philosophy.[6] What is new, if you will, is merely the openness these days with which acknowledged bourgeois authorities enter into an alliance with religion. The appeal to religious categories has become a widespread phenomenon, especially when discourse touches on the fundamental positions of historical scholarship. So it is not surprising that the idea of progress is denied in contemporary bourgeois historiography, and among other reasons on the ground that it is incompatible with the idea of "divine justice."[7] Moreover, the compatibility in principle of scholarly knowledge and religious faith is emphasized. Authentic scholarship, O. G. Oexle asserts, does not deny that, "along with its own means of knowing reality, there exist others: 'life' as a sphere of decisions and activity, art, and, of course, religion."[8]

But there is something else more important. The deep awareness by bourgeois historians of the crisis-prone, even the catastrophic, nature of our time arouses them to intense activity. Characteristic of the new moment in the development of contemporary bourgeois historiography is its clearly growing self-assessment of the past 10–15 years. In the place of the recently widespread pessimistic western judgments concerning the validity of history in the contemporary world, some of which went as far as the complete denial that it had any social significance in view of, as it were, the impassable gulf between past and present, the conviction is arising that it is exactly a knowledge of the past that is the necessary prerequisite for grasping the present.[9]

Of course this does not mean that the crisis of bourgeois historiography has been overcome, since at the contemporary stage it has emerged above all as a crisis of history's social function.[10] As before, though perhaps not so univocally as 10–15 years ago, scholars acknowledge the crisis-condition of historical scholarship. Yet it is important to emphasize in all this that the possibility of a way out of it is seen by them to lie in the social potential of this scholarship, its capacity to some extent to contribute toward overcoming the pessimistic sense of the world. This is particularly the train of reasoning of the American historian D. Joyce as he attempts to think through the nature of historical scholarship. He starts by acknowledging the indisputable fact that this crisis still goes on and, in a certain sense, has even become more severe, manifesting itself particularly in the drop in status in the teaching of history in primary as well as in secondary education. Nevertheless, the author himself firmly believes in the high social calling of his discipline, its capacity to place a knowledge of the past at the service of the present. "History," he writes, "is the study of the human past with the purpose of understanding and possibly improving the human present and future."[11]

This definition of history, accenting its social significance, is interesting not for its uniqueness, but quite the contrary for its ordinariness. In it are reflected the pretensions to social activism characteristic of contemporary western historiography. With a characteristic reference to Marx's famous thesis,[12] it is asserted that history's task is to help change the world. It is precisely on how successfully this task is resolved that historical scholarship's way out from its crisis depends, according to the West German historian R. Hesse: "Marx's thesis that the point is to change the world implies . . . an historical scholarship that understands its responsibility to provide a prerequisite for decisive change."[13] The persistent proclamation of history's responsibility not only for the present, but also for the future of the world, calls attention to itself in this statement. In spite of the ideas dominant in the west till quite recently, appeal to the future sounds forth as the historian's professional obligation.[14] "The historian" – so E. Schulin considers – "must ponder what chances mankind has in the future, what values he must renounce, and what values he must not renounce."[15]

Symptomatic of the views now prevailing on the place of history in society is R. Schörken's book which, while revealing the multiform ways that history penetrates daily life, formulates a position on the existence of a common human demand in history, for without history there can be no self-cognition either of man or of society. "History," he asserts, "is the quickest path to the human ego. It is a mirror in which one seeks oneself, one's problems, the epoch to which one belongs, and where in changed form one finds them."[16]

One of the most attractive spheres for the practical application of historical knowledge is politics. The link between history and politics, as is well known, has always been acknowledged in bourgeois scholarship. In contemporary western literature it is examined, in part, from the point of view of research of a theoretical nature and of the practical significance of such a link. In this regard, the special issue of the influential international journal *History and Theory* dedicated to the above problem has a special interest. It begins with an article by Th. Schieder which has a programmatic character. It is literally suffused with the idea of the outstanding socio-political significance of history. The author polemicizes against the view, originating in Nietzsche, of the "harm" history does, defining it on the contrary as a "compass that can help guide our way into the future."[17]

How can history perform the function of a "social compass"? The article's content serves as an answer to this question. It grounds its position on the assumption that political action grows out of historical consciousness. Using varied materials, Schieder demonstrates the outstanding political significance of historical consciousness, in the past as well as – in his polemic against ideas concerning the absence of a link between the historical past and the technological future – at the present time. For, he maintains, "historical consciousness" can oppose the dangers of contemporary "technological civilization," with the possibility "of reestablishing the continuum" of human history. And yet, the author warns, historical consciousness can also be false, illusory, built on the distortion of historical reality. In order not to permit this, he appeals characteristically to political leadership, which ought to guarantee history its own appropriate status as a contemporary, critical scholarly discipline, and the factor of political education its own. "There is such a thing as acting politically *out of* historical consciousness, but there is also, I feel, such a thing as acting politically *for* historical consciousness," Schieder concludes his article, calling directly on the bourgeois state and thus exposing the class meaning of his reflections.[18]

In this same issue of *History and Theory*, the distinguished West German methodologist Karl-Georg Faber also polemicizes against the hypothesis that history cannot put forward "formulas for acting in the present or planning for the future."[19] The theorizing bourgeois historians persistently recommend their scholarship as political and, given appropriate backing by the ruling circles, capable of actively influencing politics in the name of strengthening the foundations of capitalist society.

The growing pretensions of bourgeois historiography to its own social significance cannot be analyzed in isolation from the internal processes taking place within it, connected with a definite reexamination of some of its basic theoretical-methodological mind-sets. In the most general way, their nature might be characterized as a modernization of these mind-sets in the conditions of the Scientific Technical Revolution, which has found its expression in a so-called "scientization" of historical knowledge achieved by way of appropriating the methods of the social and natural sciences. The proximation of history to these sciences has determined the main line of its development in the last decades. There have undoubtedly been some distinctly positive results achieved by bourgeois historiography along this path. To these one may ascribe particularly the significant broadening of the problematics of research; new historical sub-disciplines have arisen, have developed intensively, enriching in various degrees our knowledge of the past, revealing new layers and cross-sections in it. There has taken place a substantial re-examination of the very nature of historical knowledge, and along with that of the subject-matter of history. The famous English historian G. Barraclough has well expressed its direction. "If we seek," he writes, "to specify the ways in which the social sciences have affected the attitudes and presuppositions of historians, there is no doubt that the first and most general result was a major shift of focus from the particular to the general, from events to uniformities, and from narrative to analysis."[20]

This is how the "new historical scholarship" or the "new scientific history" arose, in many ways defining the face of contemporary bourgeois historiography. Its characteristic feature has become an interdisciplinary approach, within the framework of which a systematic research of the socio-economic and ideological-intellectual foundations of the historical process takes place. According to numerous acknowledgments on the part of the bourgeois historians themselves, their turn in the direction of such research was directly connected with the influence of Marxist methodology. If one adds to this the broad current of literature on the most various problems of social and economic history, historical demography, the history of mass culture, etc., then the shifts that have taken place in the last decades in bourgeois historical thinking itself become obvious, as well as how they have led in the final analysis to a growth in the self-consciousness of bourgeois historical scholarship.[21]

Today, along with this tendency, there is another that surfaces more and more distinctly. The scientization of bourgeois historical scholarship has not, in the main, justified the hopes invested in it. It has not resulted in overcoming the crisis of its theoretical-methodological foundations. And this was predictable, since it practically has not touched the fundamental principles on which contemporary bourgeois historical thinking rests. By this I mean not only that it has remained basically idealistic. Another point is worth noting. Along with the pretension of contemporary bourgeois historiography to science, there oddly co-exist ideas refuting that pretension. To begin with, bourgeois historiography has not been able to deliver itself from its inherently irrational ideas. A strong streak of irrationalism manifests itself characteristically in stark relief in its approach to the most fundamental historical-perspectival problems. At its basis lies the conviction, starkly expressed in Schieder's formula, that "history would remain an enigma, even if its various phases were clarified down to the last details."[22]

The original theoretical basis for such a conviction is the idea of the irrationality and unfathomability of the chief historical actor, man. It is simply striking how eagerly some leading representatives of the "new scientific" history assert this! Concerning "so odd and unpredictable and irrational a creature as man," writes the distinguished American researcher L. Stone, requires of the historian because of this, "a becoming modesty about the validity of his discoveries in this most difficult of disciplines."[23] Another acknowledged authority of the American "new scientific" history, P. Loewenberg, states emphatically that, "the forces of passion and irrationality that are all about us, as well as in us, are so overwhelming in history that only by the utmost stretching of all plausibility can they be denied."[24] To top it off, the notable American historian M. Kammen sees "one of the most fascinating trends in contemporary historical thought" in "the growing appreciation of nonrational elements in man's history and behavior."[25]

Thus the scientization of bourgeois historiography has appeared to be quite relative, superficial, and has not led to a radical reexamination of the understanding of the nature of historical knowledge. The very "scienticity" of history is understood in quite a primitive manner. One of the adepts of the "new scientific" history, the American J. Kousser, while linking to its successes the hope that "history may become, at least in part, a science," immediately hastens to qualify: "By 'scientific' here, I mean not that historians will discover universal laws but merely that they will establish a widespread consensus among scholars on a set of important if narrow facts . . . and that systematic research that builds on earlier firmly grounded results is possible."[26]

And so, the scienticity of history consists, according to this point of view so very widespread in the west, not in its capacity to provide objective-realistic knowledge of its subject, not in its capacity, operating by strictly scientific categories, to reveal the operative regularities of social development, but in the possibility of achieving by it more or less systematic "generally significant" knowledge. Besides, the orientation to the methods of the natural sciences does not as yet, by any means, indicate an acknowledgment of the natural-scientific nature of the development of society. On the contrary, bourgeois authors pounce on those thinkers of the past who have attempted to bring closer social and natural laws with the aim of attributing to society the nature of an organism that develops with the necessity and objectivity of nature.[27]

And of what kind of scientific precision can one speak, if it is asserted that history with the help of abstract universal concepts "forms time," that is, in other words, creates a fundamentally subjective construction of the historical process? Laying the groundwork for this position, P. Munz declares that "time is transformed into history by consciousness and that consciousness is able to bring this transformation about by making use of universals." It is interesting that Munz is a convinced structuralist and that he defines his theory as one of the variants of structuralism.[28] Thus in the stream of the "new scientific" history the most outmoded ideas on the nature of historical knowledge that directly contradict its objectivity would seem to be possible.

Yet even those bourgeois scholars who more-or-less decisively take a stand against these subjective conceptions cannot find a true resolution of the problem of the scienticity of historical knowledge. Here is the train of reasoning of the notable West German representative of an analytic philosophy of history, K. Acham. He acknowledges in principle the possibility of objective historical knowledge, abundantly citing in the process Marxist and even Soviet authors. Yet while arguing against subjectivism, he essentially resolves the problem of the objectivity of historical knowledge precisely on subjective grounds. Only thus can one understand Acham's assertion that the condition for objectivity is common agreement concerning the criteria for the selection of materials that are defined by the practical interests or convictions of the historian. "If we call the historian objective," he further emphasizes, "then above all we mean by that that he offers a judgment which in its cognitive content is capable of sustaining intersubjective verification."[29] The scientific inadequacy of equating objectivity and general significance was exposed as far back as Lenin, who, in his polemic against those Russian followers of Ernst Mach (who insisted on such an equation) emphasized that "religion, too, is generally significant."[30] Such is the theoretical level of the advocates of neo-objectivism, who repeat the remnants of idealist ideas long ago criticized effectively by Marxist science.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of the superficial nature of the scientization that bourgeois historiography is undergoing is the fact that it has not only not resolved what was for it an acute problem – is history a science? – but in a paradoxical way has actually made it more acute. "Moreover," Kammen acknowledges, "the long-standing question whether History is or can be a scientific discipline seems further than ever from solution."[31] And an altogether striking declaration along this line has been made by the acknowledged leader of the American cliometricians, R. Fogel. Having made a resonant name for himself in western scholarship thanks to his broad application of quantitative methods and his construction of mathematical models, he nevertheless asserts that "quantification will not transform history into a science but merely expand the store of scientifically validated knowledge on which historians can draw . . . . Nor do I believe," he concludes the train of his thoughts, "that the quantification requires the abandonment of history as a literary art."[32]

Why has not the scientization of bourgeois historiography, even according to its advocates, led to its transformation into a science? Responding to this question, the notable American cliometrician J. Clubb acknowledges that it is not a matter of mathematical or other procedures, but that "other issues of method are of more fundamental importance. Among these, problems of theory and conceptualization are central."[33] The immediate goal of any science is a theoretical model of reality. It possesses a definite system of basic scientific concepts with the help of which the description and explanation of its subject matter are brought about. Applied to history this means the possession of an apparatus of categories for the interpretation of historical reality on the conceptual-theoretical level. In distinction from art, history, like other sciences, grasps reality above all in the form of scientific concepts which adequately reveal the essentially predictable connections of the real world. In other words, it is precisely in the realm of historical synthesis that the nature of history as a science finds expression.

But it is the realm of theory, synthesis, which remains a disaster area of the "new scientific" history. Moreover, expressing a quite widespread opinion in this matter, Fogel even suggests that it is, in general, located beyond the boundaries of science. Acknowledging the importance and the need for history to adopt the achievements of the social sciences, he nevertheless insists that although these achievements can be included in historical synthesis, this latter lies outside the competence of the social sciences. When historians try to interpret human behavior as a whole, Fogel affirms, they leave the framework of the social sciences and invade the moral and esthetic realms.[34] Putting it somewhat differently, historical synthesis is conceived as not so much a matter of science as of art. But this indicates an acknowledgment of the impossibility in principle of the comprehending of historical reality on the level of scientific theory. For the departure of historical synthesis into the realm of morality and art implies – or, at least, in any case does not exclude – the existence of "the enigma of history," which can be expressed with the aid of moral categories or artistic images, but can in no way be understood by scientific concepts. Moreover, the scientization of history not only does not lead to the resolution of its mysteries, but makes even more obvious the limits of the scientific knowledge of human activity conditioned by the significant indefiniteness and unpredictability of its conclusions.[35]

It is curious that Kammen sees the essential token of the condition of American historiography precisely in the affirmation in it of similar ideas. He emphasizes that, in a single generation, there is being asserted "the acknowledgment of unexplainable elements in human history . . . . [H]istorians have become cautious about uncritically borrowing their explanations of human behavior from the social sciences."[36] And this is said about the generation that experienced the triumphal march of the "new scientific" history! Modernized bourgeois historiography's rejection of neo-Kantian ideas of history as an individualizing discipline consequently does not appear so radical as might at first glance appear in the light of its orientation to the social and even the natural sciences. A more attentive acquaintance with the nature of this orientation reveals its predominantly instrumentalist nature. For the most part, discourse deals with the borrowing of the methods of these sciences, which really do significantly extend the cognitive possibilities of bourgeois historiography, but in essence do not encroach on its ideographic nature.

It is also beyond dispute that the emphasis on the general in historical research that has grown in the past decades sits oddly alongside the preservation of the fundamental methodological position concerning history as an individualizing science. Stone asserts, "It may be that the time has come for the historian to reassert the importance of the concrete, the particular, and the circumstantial, as well as the general theoretical model and the procedural insight."[37] But it is precisely with the theoretical model, according to these bourgeois authors themselves, that the matter is far from being in good shape. In spite of the intensive efforts in this direction, the former complaints of a "deficit in theory" do not cease. As E. Breisach ascertains, bourgeois historical thought has not been able to work out new conceptual "models, uniting past, present, and future." Moreover, in a characteristic manner, he links the necessity for creating such a model to history's resumption of its former role in the life of society. "Only such models," he declares, "will enable historians to make full use of the significant achievements of historical science."[38]

In their search for such a model, bourgeois scholars are constantly forced to turn to the past of their discipline. In the light of this, one ought to examine the positing of the theme "Max Weber and the Methodology of History," at the 16th International Congress of the Historical Sciences (Stuttgart, 1986). In the course of its consideration in a number of reports and speeches of western and especially of West German historians, the tendency was clearly expressed to offer the historical conception of Weber as some kind of "universal model." For bourgeois theoreticians its attractive force consisted of its pretension to being a "decisive alternative" to Marxism and even to "overcoming" it. Weber (1864–1920) was undoubtedly one of the most powerful bourgeois thinkers who seriously influenced the development of many branches of non-Marxist social studies in the 20th century, including historical scholarship. His works contain valuable hypotheses that reveal the social significance of several ethical, legal, and religious conceptions of the past. His general-historical conceptions were undoubtedly influenced by Marxist teachings about society. However, his pretensions to having created an all-embracing theoretical model capable of "overcoming" the Marxist understanding of history, as the whole development of socio-historical knowledge in our century witnesses, has turned out to be insubstantial in its very foundation.[39]

In spite of the traditional piety with which Weber's name is surrounded in bourgeois social studies, his historical theoretical views have by no means prevailed. At the 16th International Congress, even some non-Marxist scholars expressed quite a fundamental criticism of it.[40] It is important, however, to emphasize something else. In the opinion of Weber's contemporary apologists, his theoretical conceptions have a very limited significance. His discourse does not at all deal with a theory of the historical process as a whole or even, as it were, with a theory of the development of western society, but with a system of "ideal types" or models of development, capable of interpreting the historical process in the light of the "traditions of western individualism," with the aim of "helping preserve the optimum of freedom and human dignity in the contemporary world."[41]

The attempt to create an original Weber "cult" has illuminated even more clearly the theoretical insubstantiality of contemporary bourgeois historical thought. The modernization of the theoretical-methodological foundations of bourgeois historiography – undertaken in the name of increasing its social importance, seen as its most important task – was not one it could resolve. But at the same time it created new problems. Among them were the continuing dissociation of the different branches of historical knowledge, posing a threat to the unity of history as a scholarly discipline. Proceeding with varying degrees of intensity in the various national historiographies, it has now reached a special sharpness in the U.S.A. where, in the frame of the "new scientific" history, a series of sub-disciplines have arisen which have little or no connection with each other, while on the other hand the dissociation of specialists studying various historico-geographical regions has also grown.

Philip Curtin has acknowledged that extreme specialization is the fundamental problem negatively influencing the study of history in the U.S.A. as well as its teaching. He remarked that the unusual expansion of the discipline in the postwar decades has resulted in a decline in the erudition of specialists, a loss of the capacity to conceptualize the historical process in its integrity. Today, he writes, "The Asianists and Africanists know next to nothing about European or American history. Americanists know less European history than they did thirty years ago."[42] Curtin, while remarking on the growth of specialization and mutual estrangement in the framework of the American Historical Association, emphasizes its serious consequences for this organization and for historical scholarship as a whole.

This dissolution quite often takes the form of a direct antagonism between the "new" and traditional historians, that in its extreme expressions goes so far as the denial of traditional scholarship's right to exist. Such aggressiveness is especially characteristic of certain psychohistorians, who make a big fuss about counterpoising their discipline to "unscientific" history. An indicative example of this is the judgment of one of the most powerful and pretentious of the American psychohistorians, L. deMause. In an article bearing the highly significant title "Psychohistory: A New Science," he counterpoises his own discipline directly to traditional history wallowing in academic scholasticism, asserting that in fact "psychohistory had become a new *science of patterns of historical motivations.*"[43] The unique apogee of the nihilistic attitude that the most militant segment of the psychohistorians has to history, was the discussion that appeared in 1981 in the pages of the *Journal of Psychohistory*. The preponderant majority of its participants, including deMause, demonstrated a profound dislike, substantially for history as a distorted fantasy, an illusion, moreover one that as a special science was approaching its end.[44]

Certainly such expressions, although it would be easy to cite many more, are the extremes. In hypertrophic form, however, they express a definite tendency, connected with the scientization of bourgeois historiography and threatening, to use Stone's words, "factional fragmentation."[45] This threat is all the more real, since on the part of the traditional historians there is an analogous relationship to their opponents, stimulated by the obvious "discrepancies" between the pretensions of the "new scientific" historians and reality. This is quite evident in the example of cliometric researches (founded on the application of mathematical methods) that present the unique visiting card of the "new scientific" history. Today, both the enormous sweep of these researches, that have embraced literally all spheres of historical knowledge, and the sum of the results achieved by them are generally acknowledged. Generally acknowledged as well, however, is the clear reality that would seem a long way from the one that the more zealous proponents of the mathematization of history anticipated 10–15 years ago, when E. Le Roy Ladurie predicted that in 80 years "the historian will be a programmer or he will be nothing."[46]

In reality, as is well known, the overall computerization of history has not taken place. As David Landes, in the framework of the American Association of Economic History, where cliometric researches in the U.S.A. have acquired a special scope, was forced to acknowledge, "Many, if not most, of the important questions that we have to deal with do not lend themselves – at least not as yet – to quantitative treatment . . . . There are whole areas of history where we probably will never have the numbers we need. Sometimes we have the numbers, but they do not tell us enough."[47] On the complex problems connected with the application of quantitative methods to history, the notable American cliometrists A. G. Bogue and T. K. Rabb also write.[48]

A strong streak of anti-historicism has seemed characteristic of cliometric researches, especially in the U.S.A. As Soviet historians emphasize, "the representatives of 'cliometric history' in the U.S.A. not only break down research of the historical process into separate elements as before, they try as well to exclude the study of basic phenomena from the sphere of historical research. A great portion of the researches in economic history has the nature of empirical researches into local phenomena."[49] As far as the attempts by different cliometricians to adopt broad conceptual structures is concerned, as a rule they display a subjective-voluntaristic nature.[50]

The form and language of cliometric researches deserve special discussion since these make them incomprehensible to historians who have not undergone mathematical preparation, and reinforce even more the break between them and traditional historians. Even taking into account the exaggeration implicit in a statement like one to the effect that it is impossible to write in mathematical language and English at the same time, the problem of mutual understanding among the various currents of bourgeois historical scholarship undoubtedly exists, and it intensifies still more the danger of its split. The problem of communicability has yet another no less important aspect. The widespread borrowing of the methods and language of the natural sciences conceals within itself the real danger that history might be transformed into an esoteric science (that is, accessible to the chosen few, to whom it essentially also appeals). In such a case, the direct link between historians and a broad reading public would disappear – a link that was so characteristic of the historical scholarship of the 19th century, one of the most important sources of its high social prestige. It is obvious that this cannot help but reflect as a whole on the realization by bourgeois historiography of its social function.

Among the problems to which the scientization of bourgeois historiography has given birth, there is one that seems unexpected at first glance, yet nevertheless, it really exists. I refer to the verifiability of the sources with which the "new scientific" historians work. It would seem that the scientization of bourgeois historiography should have led to the perfection of devices for source analysis. Actually, something contrary has occurred: the well-known loss of those positive qualities which had long been characteristic of a bourgeois historicism that had wrought a fine methodological procedure for the formal critique of sources stares us in the face. The "new scientific" history's characteristic expansion of its circle of sources often has, as the opposite side of its coin, a noticeable decline in the technique of work on them. Many responsible conclusions are made on practically unverifiable material, are founded on an uncorrespondingly narrow empirical base.

This is relevant above all to psychohistorians, the inadequacy of whose source-base has long been an object of criticism even on the part of basically sympathetic bourgeois authors.[51] Serious critical remarks of this sort are also being addressed to cliometry. Stone in particular has shown convincingly that it is impossible to adapt it to those professional standards that have been worked out over the ages in historiography for the scholarly appraisal of historical testimony, so that the reader has to take on faith the cliometric structures which he cannot verify or evaluate.[52]

An especially outstanding characteristic of modernized bourgeois historical scholarship is the traces of anti-historism that appear in what is, for it, the typical juxtaposition of an event-oriented and a structure-oriented ("serial") history. Striking out rightly against the superficiality of description that typified traditional bourgeois historiography, and in opposition to this setting forth the demand for displaying the deep factors of the historical process, the "new scientific" historians have dashed off to another extremity, almost more destructive for the very existence of historical scholarship. Concentrating their forces on the study of structures, local economic or social phenomena, etc., they "break down the study of the historical process into its separate elements,"[53] as a result of which, the idea of the integrity of history is lost. Moreover, they expel a central category, one on which all historical knowledge is based – the historical event. As A. I. Danilov has emphasized, "The historical world is a world of events. Where there are no events, there is no change, no movement, no development, and, as a consequence, no history as reality."[54]

Whatever significance the research of economic, demographic, and other factors might have, it can be considered historical only if it is included in a canvas of events in which the movement of history is expressed. In the opposite case, we would have some other discipline, perhaps no less important, but anyway, not history. A discipline that ignores events in which human activity is incarnated in history, opposing to them so-called structures of prolonged duration or cliometric models structured by means of mathematics, practically ceases to be history in the commonly accepted sense of that word.

Thus the scientization of history can be characterized as an extremely contradictory phenomenon with regard to its theoretical substance and its consequences for the development of bourgeois historiography. This accounts for the ambivalent attitude western historians have to it. On the one hand, the irreversibility of the process that has brought history and the social and natural sciences closer together is acknowledged, which leads to the permanent expansion of the boundaries of factual knowledge, enriching our cognitive instrumentalization, and to the well-known growth of theoretical understanding. On the other hand, there are alarming tendencies that can be seen in this process that might lead to the collapse from within of bourgeois historism. Hence the sharp, occasionally quite venomous criticism of the "extremes" of scientization, especially in the forms of cliometry and psychohistory, but also the demands for reexamination of the nature of mutual relationships between history and the social sciences.

Without denying in principle the fruitfulness of the very fact of proximation among these disciplines, several bourgeois historians rightly warn of the danger of the extreme sociologization of historical scholarship as threatening to its independence. Moreover, they point out a deep crisis which the bourgeois social sciences are experiencing, incapable as they are of satisfactorily resolving the painful problems of the life of contemporary capitalist society. Therefore, Stone, using to effect a well-known expression, posits that "it might be time for the historical rats to leave rather than to scramble aboard the social scientific ship which seems to be leaking and undergoing major repair."[55] It is probably appropriate to consider the quite remarkable recent manifestation in bourgeois historiography that has been called the "renaissance of narrative" just such a flight. Even at the very beginning of the '70s, the notable English historian A. Marwick, ascertaining the definite disenchantment of his British colleagues from the possibilities of a sociologized history, remarked penetratingly the turn "to that kind of history which is characterized by its close association with literature."[56]

This turn deserves special attention insofar as it reflects one of the most recent tendencies of contemporary bourgeois historiography and provides objective witness to the blind-alleys of the bourgeois scientization of history. In the '70s in various national historiographies of the west a tendency was clearly expressed in the direction of a unique rehabilitation of narrative history-writing as the main form for the depiction of history. Without even speaking of the numerous expressions of various bourgeois authors who have announced (and invited) the renaissance of narrative,[57] this phenomenon has received a basic theoretical elaboration above all in the fundamental monograph of Hayden White, considered in the west as one of the most significant historical-theoretical works of the 20th century, which the book has become: the turning point in the contemporary discussion on the foundations of historical scholarship. White elaborates a theory of historical writing as a verbal (lettristic) structure, foregrounding first of all in historical composition the literary shaping of the historian's work.[58]

Indicative are the shifts that are taking place in the latest French historiography. If only quite recently, the representatives of the so-called new historical scholarship, who occupy the leading position in contemporary French bourgeois historiography, had definitely rejected "event" history as unscientific.[59] From the second half of the '70s, their position began to change substantially. Back to the history of events went even such an irreconcilable past opponent as Le Roy Ladurie.[60] The "renaissance of narrative" is at the present time one of the characteristic features of the "new historical scholarship" in France.[61]

The problem of narrative is discussed with special intensity in the historiography of West Germany. Suffice it to say that as recently as the end of the '70s there took place there a series of discussions dedicated to the mutual relationship of story and theory in historical writing, its forms, etc. The published materials of these discussions (in which many well known West German scholars took part) bear witness to the reexamination taking place at the present time of the understanding of the very nature and tasks of historical writing. In their extreme expressions they go as far as to demand expelling all theory from historical writing. "I do not believe that history is in need of theory," declares G. Mann, "History is an art that bases itself on known facts, and nothing more."[62]

More widespread, and, of course, more in perspective, is the striving to found a form of historical writing that would combine theory and narrative (story). It has been expressed most consistently by J. Rüsen. Acknowledging that story is the most adequate form of historical writing, he emphasizes at the same time that, "without theory, there is no history," that theory lies at the base of any narrative construction.[63] Another article of his is of special interest; on the basis of immense historiographical material, it raises the problem of historical writing as a theoretical problem of historical scholarship.[64] Remarking that historical writing arose and developed as a branch of rhetoric – and escaped from under rhetoric's tutelage only in the 19th century, as a result of the systematization of historical thinking – Rüsen emphasizes that in the '70s of our century, in the discussion of theory and story, a new discovery emerged: that of historical writing as the main problem of historical scholarship.

And why had this happened precisely in the '70s? Rüsen's answer is extremely instructive for an understanding of the processes at work in contemporary bourgeois historiography. In the most definitive manner, he connects the turn to narrative with the consequences of the scientization of history: the proximation of history with the social sciences had placed its independence in question, and consequently also its right to existence in a series of other sciences, for it would seem at best a vaguely dim, self-constituting sign that distinguished a scientized historiography from other social sciences. This is why, Rüsen emphasizes, "In the aim of the self-preservation of historical scholarship as a discipline, it became necessary to find criteria, with the half of which one could precisely define its uniqueness and its tasks in the context of other sciences. The narrative structure of historical judgments appeared as this criterion." And he further asserts that it is precisely in story that history realizes its own uniqueness as a science.[65] Therefore Rüsen insists on the necessity for a radical reexamination of the functional dependence of historical depiction on historical research, having in mind acknowledging the priority of the story, with its intrinsic esthetic and poetic principles, over historical method as the aggregate of research procedures. In this way, Rüsen proposes, the theory of history should once again, as it did in former times, become a poetics of historical writing.[66]

In itself, an orientation to the esthetic aspect of historical knowledge cannot be seen simply as negative. On the contrary, it is a healthy reaction against the excessive sociologization of history, that threatens its very status as a discipline revealing the historical activity of man. The point lies in the very tendency of the bourgeois theoreticians' orientation to narrative. It has always existed in bourgeois historiography and its position was not exactly seriously undermined in the period of history's scientization. Therefore, the phenomenon called the "renaissance of narrative" has to be understood not so much in the literal sense, but as an expression of distinctive movements that are taking place in contemporary bourgeois historical-theoretical thinking. Although it is connected with the reaction to the scientization of history, and notices some of its real weaknesses and flaws, it also contains within itself obvious negative moments, which in the long run also define its general ideological-theoretical resonance.

First of all, it is what the American philosopher of history Louis O. Mink calls a rallying cry of the "New Rhetorical Relativism," connecting it with White's *Metahistory* as the "most considered rejection of the ideal of historical objectivity."[67] The insubstantiality of "trying to conform to the standards of scientific detachment" is asserted.[68] Moreover, the possibility of objective historical depiction is denied on the grounds that the facts and events that compose the web of narrative are no reflection of objective reality, but merely linguistic constructs, which historians possessed by various predilections create.[69] In this manner, the unscientific nature of history is emphasized, its incapacity to reveal authentic laws.[70] The opposite side of "rhetorical relativism" is the intensification of the militant methodological pluralism of contemporary bourgeois historiography. "The vast majority of Anglo-American academic historians," it is noted in a recent English methodological work, "seem to be both in their practice and in their relatively rare moments of theory causal pluralists."[71] R. Beringer (U.S.A.) in a somewhat more generalized way – as if commenting on a definite tendency – formulates a position to the effect that "modern historiography has . . . been forced away from monocausation into acceptance of pluralism."[72] Methodological pluralism emerges today as virtually the most common feature of bourgeois historiography, concerning which all its representatives display a striking unanimity. Besides, in a peculiar way, its domination is connected with the reaction against scientization. Thus, Stone, expressing an opinion widely held in this matter calls it directly a reaction against the simplified mechanistic determinism and the monocausal and single-line theories of historical explanation that characterize, as it were, a sociologized history. Therefore he concludes his train of thoughts: "The first cause of the current revival of narrative is widespread disillusionment with the economic determinist model of historical explanation."[73]

This "disenchantment" is clearly seen, in particular, in the research aims of the so-called history of mentality (from the French *mentalités*, mind-sets), which have been making such turbulent progress in the west in the last decades. Having selected as their object of study the sphere of public opinion, collective mind-sets, social norms of behavior, etc., the historians of mentality to a certain degree enrich our understanding of the intellectual life of the past, illuminate aspects that have usually remained in shadow. However, the scholarly significance of these researches, in many ways, is devalued by the emphatic empiricism of their authors. Decisive denial of broad generalizations is elevated by them into a principle, founding which, the French historian G. Duby declares: "Insofar as any theory to which I might become captive paralyzes the life I observe, I do everything I can to liberate myself from its influence."[74] Especially unacceptable for bourgeois historians is the materialist theory of the historical process. They assert the impossibility of revealing the causal link between the material conditions of the life of society and the mind-sets that dominate it, the social behavior of its members. Social conflicts are uprooted from their economic soil, are proclaimed product of forms of group consciousness, independent of economic facts.[75]

The predictable result of the struggle with "methodological dogmatism" and "mechanistic determinism" has been the intensification of subjective-idealistic tendencies in the methodological baggage of contemporary bourgeois historiography. "Many historians now believe," Stone asserts, "that the culture of the group, and even the will of the individual, are potentially at least as important causal agents of change as the impersonal forces of material output and demographic growth. There is no theoretical reason why the latter should always dictate the former, rather than vice versa, and indeed evidence is piling up of examples to the contrary."[76]

The reverse side of this conviction is the emphasis on irrational causes as much in historical reality itself as in its cognition. Subjective-irrational features have appeared as more-or-less characteristic of bourgeois scientized historical thinking. They are all the more intensified in connection with the "renaissance of narrative," in fact determining the approach to historical story-telling. Actually, if it is asserted at the very highest level that historians must be "the narrators of worlds in motion – worlds as complex, unpredictable, and transient as our own,"[77] they must then possess a methodology adequate for such a task.

In the light of this, one must examine the growing interest of bourgeois historiography in the theoretical heritage of German idealistic historicism, and especially in its central core – its teaching about understanding. Above all, of course, this relates to West German historical scholarship. While it has not been long since it declared about itself that it was "beyond historicism," in the course of the last decade, West German scholarship has clearly demonstrated a proximation to historicism's basic methodological premises. It is not by chance that all methodological discussions of the last years have appealed to the classics of German idealist historicism, especially to Droysen and Dilthey. Certainly, I do not speak of the simple perception of the historical tradition in contemporary historiography. There is a more complex process going on, which the influential west European historian K. D. Erdman, adapting this tradition to contemporary realities, has defined as the rise of neo-historicism.[78]

As to how far this process has gone, the evolution of one of the most radical socio-critical currents in the bourgeois historiography of West Germany bears witness. Having started with the counter-positioning of its own ideological-theoretical positions to the principles of classical German historicism, its leading representatives not only significantly soften this opposition but quite unambiguously declare their adherence to the historical tradition. One of the leading representatives of this movement, J. Kocka, has directly declared "hermeneutic understanding and interpretation" in the study and depiction of history as "obligatory and central."[79] In such an atmosphere, therefore, the appearance of works by young historians in which "understanding" is extolled as opposed to "explanation" is not surprising, and correspondingly that history is declared to be a purely descriptive science.[80]

While examining the theoretical-methodological quest of contemporary bourgeois historiography, one cannot avoid its ideological sense and direction. Contemporary bourgeois historical thought forms an important link in the chain of imperialist ideology and is subject in its development to the general developmental laws of the latter. Without reducing history to ideology, acknowledging its relative independence as a scholarly discipline, one cannot, however, forget its ideological nature, which substantially finds its expression in the fact that, in its basic aims and results, it reflects these laws. As far as the present historiographical situation is concerned, this means that the renewed growth of conservative and openly reactionary tendencies in the politics and ideology of the ruling classes is predictably revealed in the various fields of bourgeois social thought as well, the historical among them.

In Soviet historical scholarship, the move to the right of bourgeois historiography has been especially convincingly demonstrated with regard to French materials. "Historical scholarship has been directly faced with the task," Afanasev emphasizes, speaking of the contemporary situation in France, "to root out of France's cultural heritage the ideas of progress, revolutions, and class struggle, to adapt the consciousness of the ordinary Frenchman to a bourgeois understanding of the contemporary epoch."[81]

This position is completely relevant to the other national bourgeois historiographies as well. Of course, they are not ideologically homologous. Just as bourgeois society itself is not, and one of the actual tasks of Soviet scholarship consists of researching in detail the ideological form of bourgeois historiography in all its multi-coloredness. And for all the motley gamut of shadings that compose this form, conservative tones predominate at present. This ideological direction of contemporary bourgeois historiography is a substantial factor that influences its methodological quest, and conditions the ultimate insubstantiality, in the main, of its attempts to overcome its theoretical-methodological crisis. Certainly, this quest as a whole is not entirely scientifically fruitless, and Marxist historians are obliged to take into careful account the positive results achieved. But this cannot shake the conclusion that the main aim of the bourgeois ideologues – the creation, from their point of view, of a real alternative to the Marxist understanding of history – remains, now as before, unrealized.

Here lie the deep sources of what is, at first glance, a paradoxical circumstance, that the growth of the social activism of bourgeois historiography emerges as an expression of the crisis of its social function. For in itself this growth does not solve the problems that confront bourgeois scholarship. Moreover, according to the notable West German historian W. Mommsen, it is not even in shape to overcome the estrangement between the reading public and historians.[82] In all this, the wavelike movement of the crisis calls attention to itself. If in the '60s and beginning of the '70s it manifested itself especially strongly in West Germany, where in general the social necessity of history as a science was submitted to questioning, at present its unique epicenter has shifted to the U.S.A.[83] "A discipline in crisis," proclaims the very important American historian O. Handlin, emphasizing the fall in prestige of the study of the past as a result of its incapacity to be of use in the present, and expressing in connection with this a disenchantment with the results achieved by the "new scientific" historians.[84] "Professional historians, divided on many issues," C. Sonnichsen echoes him, "agree on one main proposition: their discipline is sick – perhaps unto death."[85]

For all the obvious polemical sharpness of this position, it nevertheless reflects the real difficulties which American bourgeois historiography is experiencing today. Their reasons are no mystery for its more thoughtful representatives. Ascertaining that history is experiencing a crisis – and presenting the question, "why has history lost influence? why do the doubts of its importance and the aptness of its means of searching out truth, for our century, sound so persistently?" – E. Breisach, to answer these questions, turns to an analysis of the intellectual condition of contemporary bourgeois society. He rightly indicates the features of anti-historism characteristic of this society, which became specially intense after the second world war. At the same time, Breisach generalizes his observations, extending them without qualification to all of bourgeois historiography and all of bourgeois society. And although he remarks that, in the '70s, "the illusion of a timeless age of technique and technology began to give way," and "once again the persistence of fundamental change" had "to be acknowledged," his general conclusion about the loss for bourgeois historiography of the social role that it had played in the previous century remains unshaken. The more so, he remarks, since many historians, arguing for the scienticity of history, directly reject any social role for their discipline.[86]

In this way, the latest tendencies in the development of contemporary bourgeois historiography bear witness to its continuing crisis. Definite particular results achieved in the attempts to overcome this crisis, cannot conceal the main point – bourgeois historical scholarship has shown itself incapable of radically modernizing its own theoretical-methodological foundations. Having become disenchanted with the possibility of raising its social status by way of scientization, it has made an about-face in the direction of narrative. Being by its very nature an expression of bourgeois historiography's retrograde movement, this turn will scarcely prove steadfast.

Translated by Sidney Monas

Notes

1. Reprinted in translation from *Voprosy istorii* no. 2 (1987):60–77.
2. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [*Works*]), 2nd edn (Moscow, 1957), 22:529, 530.
3. E. Weymar, "Geschichtswissenschaft und Theorie," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 34 (1983) Beiheft 2:139.
4. Peter Berglar, *Fortschritt zum Ursprung* (Salzburg, 1978), 63.
5. Theodore Schieder, "Zum Geleit," in Berglar, 8.
6. V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [*Works*], 5th ed. (Moscow, 1960–), 18:380.
7. Weymar, 138.
8. O. G. Oexle, "Die Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeichen des Historismus," *Historische Zeitschrift* 238 (1984) Beiheft 1:55.
9. See, for example, Richard Pares, *The Historian's Business and Other Essays* (Oxford, 1961); J. H. Plumb, *Crisis in the Humanities* (London, 1964); H. E. Lauer, *Die Forderung des 20. Jahrhunderts an die Geschichtsforschung* (Freiburg, 1966).
10. See my "Sovremennyi etap krizisa burzhuaznoi istoricheskoi nauki," *Voprosy istorii* no. 9 (1980).
11. D. D. Joyce, *History and Historians: Some Essays* (Washington, 1983), 3, 6.
12. See in Marx, Engels, *Works*, 3:4.
13. R. Hesse, *Geschichtswissenschaft in praktischer Absicht* (Wiesbaden, 1979), 97. [That is, that one must understand the world in order to change it: SM.]
14. See E. Schulin, "Die Zukunft in historisch-politischen Denken des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Geschichte und Zukunft* (West Berlin, 1978), 110.
15. E. Schulin, *Traditionskritik und Rekonstruktionsversuch* (Göttingen, 1979), 233.

16. R. Schörken, *Geschichte in der Alltagswelt* (Stuttgart, 1981), 115.
17. Th. Schieder, "The Role of Historical Consciousness in Political Action," *History and Theory* 17.4 (1978) Beiheft 17:8.
18. Schieder, "Historical Consciousness":15, 18.
19. Karl Georg Faber, "The Use of History in Political Debate":36.
20. G. Barraclough, *Main Trends in History* (New York, London, 1978), 51.
21. Concerning the leading tendencies in the development of the theoretical-methodological foundations of bourgeois historiography of the twentieth century, see V. I. Salov, *Istorizm i sovremennaia burzhuaznaia istoriografiia* (Moscow, 1977); K. S. Gadzhiev and N. V. Sivachev, "Problemy mezhditsiplinarnogo podkhoda i 'novoi nauchnoi' istorii v sovremennoi amerikanskoi burzhuaznoi istoriografii," *Voprosy metodologii i istorii istoricheskoi nauki*, 2nd edn (Moscow, 1978); O. L. Vainshtein, *Ocherki razvitiia burzhuaznoi filosofii i metodologii istorii v XIX–XX vv.* (Leningrad, 1979); Iu. N. Afanasev, *Istorizm protiv eklektiki* (Moscow, 1980); N. N. Bolkhovitinov, *SShA: Problemy istorii i sovremennaia istoriografiia* (Moscow, 1980); A. I. Danilov, "Problemy kontinuiteta v istoriografii FRG," *Voprosy istorii* no. 3 (1981); and others.
22. Th. Schieder, "Zum Geleit," in Berglar, 5.
23. L. Stone, *The Past and the Present* (Boston, London, Henley, 1981), 43.
24. P. Loewenberg, "Psychohistory," in *The Past Before Us* (Ithaca-London, 1980), 409.
25. M. Kammen, "Introduction: The Historian's Vocation and the State of the Discipline in the United States," in *Past Before Us*, 39.
26. J. Kousser, "Quantitative Social-Scientific History," in *Past Before Us*, 446 n. 30.
27. F. M. Barnard, "Natural Growth and Purposive Development: Vico and Herder," *History and Theory* 18.1 (1979):35–36.
28. P. Munz, *The Shapes of Time: A New Look at the Philosophy of History* (Middletown, CT, 1977), 19, 13.
29. K. Acham, "Grundlagenprobleme der Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Enzykloopädie der geisteswissenschaftlichen Arbeitsmethoden*, 10. Lieferung (München-Wien, 1974), 36.
30. V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 18:194.
31. Kammen, "Historian's Vocation," 32.
32. R. W. Fogel, "The Limits of Quantitative Methods in History," *American Historical Review* 80.2 (1975):349–50.
33. J. M. Clubb, "History as a Social Science," *International Social Science Journal* 33.4 (1981):600.
34. Fogel, "Quantitative Methods":342.
35. E. R. May, *"Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1973), 179.
36. Kammen, "Historian's Vocation":40.

37. Stone, 43.
38. E. Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, & Modern* (Chicago, London, 1983), 407.
39. See A. I. Danilov, *Problemy agrarnoi istorii rannego srednovekov'ia v nemetskoi istoriografii kontsa XIX – nachala XXV* (Moscow, 1958), 96–105; N. I. Smolenskii, "K kritike kontseptsii Maksa Vebera o prirode istoricheskogo poznaniia," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* no. 3 (1985).
40. See S. L. Tikhvinskii and V. A. Tishkov, "XVI Mezhdunarodnyi kongress istoricheskikh nauk," *Voprosy istorii* no. 1 (1986):16–17.
41. W. J. Mommsen, "Max Webers Begriff der Universalgeschichte," *Rapports [Proceedings]: XVI Congrès International des Sciences Historiques* (Stuttgart, 1985), 257.
42. P. Curtin, "Depth, Span, and Relevance," *American Historical Review* 89.1 (1984):1–3; see also O. Handlin, *Truth in History* (Cambridge, MA, London, 1979), 1–3.
43. L. deMause, "Psychohistory: The New Science", *Journal of Psychohistory* 3.1 (1975):124.
44. "The Psychohistory of History: A Symposium," *Journal of Psychohistory* 8.3 (1981):259–79.
45. Stone, 43.
46. E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Le territoire de l'historien* (Paris, 1973), 1:14.
47. D. S. Landes, "On Avoiding Babel," *Journal of Economic History* 38.1 (1978):6–7.
48. A. G. Bogue, "Kvantifikatsiia v 80–kh godakh . . . " in *Kolichestvennye metody v sovetskoi i amerikanskoi istoriografii* (Moscow, 1983); T. K. Rabb, "The Development of Quantification in Historical Research," in *Kolichestvennye metody*, also in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13 (1983).
49. I. D. Kovalchenko and V. A. Tishkov, "Itogi i perspektivy primeneniia kolichestvennykh metodov v sovetskoi i amerikanskoi istoriografii," in *Kolichestvennye metody v sovetskoi i amerikanskoi istoriografii* (Moscow, 1983), 17.
50. I. D. Kovalchenko, "O modelirovanii istoricheskikh protsessov," in *Kolichestvennye metody*, 30–31; see also I. D. Kovalchenko and N. V. Sivachev, "Strukturalizm i strukturno-kolichestvennye metody v sovremennoi istoricheskoi nauke," *Istoriia SSR* no. 5 (1976).
51. G. Izenberg, "Psychohistory and Intellectual History," *History and Theory* 14.2 (1975):139.
52. Stone, 33–36.
53. Kovalchenko and Tishkov, 17.
54. A. I. Danilov, "Istorischeskoe sobytie i istoricheskaia nauka," *Srednie veka* 43 (1980):16.
55. Stone, 31–32.
56. A. Marwick, *The Nature of History* (New York, 1971), 266.
57. On this, see Stone, 74–96.

58. H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, London, 1973), ix.
59. On the "new historical scholarship" in France, see Iu. N. Afanasev, "Vchera i segodnia frantsuzskoi 'novoi istoricheskoi nauki,'" *Voprosy istorii* no. 8 (1984).
60. E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Le Carnaval de Romans* (Paris, 1979).
61. See W. J. Mommsen, "Narrative History and Structural History: Past, Present, Perspectives," in *Rapports: XVI Congrès . . . Historiques*, 841.
62. G. Mann, "Plädoyer für die historisch Erzählung," in *Theorie und Erzählung in der Geschichte* (Munich, 1979), 53.
63. J. Rüsen, "Wie kann man Geschichte vernünftig schreiben?" in *Theorie und Erzählung*, 328.
64. See J. Rüsen, "Geschichtsschreibung als Theorieproblem der Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Formen der Geschichtsschreibung* (Munich, 1982), 23.
65. "Geschichtsschreibung als Theorieproblem," 23. However, there also exists another, more general reason for the negative reaction to the scientization of history. It has its roots in the intellectual atmosphere of contemporary western society, which is characterized by a growing disenchantment with the results of the scientific-technical revolution. Instead of the past euphoria, there have arisen skepticism, pessimism, and even open hostility to science as a "real evil" (see Oexle, 20).
66. "Geschichtsschreibung als Theorieproblem," 14, 28.
67. Louis O. Mink, "Philosophy and Theory of History," in *International Handbook of Historical Studies: Contemporary Research and Theory*, ed. Georg G. Iggers and Harold T. Parker (Westport, CT, 1979), 25.
68. G. Wright, "History as a Moral Science," *American Historical Review* 81.1 (1976):11.
69. F. G. Maier, "Der Historiker und die Texte," *Historische Zeitschrift* 238 (1984):87–89.
70. See A. Pork, *Istoricheskoe obiasnenie: Kriticheskii analiz nemarksistskikh teorii* (Tallin, 1981), 141.
71. G. McLennan, *Marxism and the Methodologies of History* (London, 1981), 233; quoting Alasdair MacIntyre, "Causality and History," in *Essays on Explanation and Understanding*, eds J. Manninen and R. Tuomela (Boston, 1976), 141.
72. R. E. Beringer, *Historical Analysis: Contemporary Approaches to Clio's Craft* (New York, 1978), ix.
73. Stone, 79–80.
74. G. Duby, "Nachwort," in G. Duby and G. Lardreau, *Geschichte und Geschichtswissenschaft* (Frankfurt, 1982), 184.
75. See H. Schulze, "Mentalitätsgeschichte – Chancen und Grenzen eines Paradigmas der französischen Geschichtswissenschaft." *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 36 (1985) Beiheft 4:250, 262.
76. Stone, 80.

77. B. Bailyn, "The Challenge of Modern Historiography," *American Historical Review* 87.1 (1982):24.
78. See H. Schleier, "Zum idealistischen Historismus in der bürgerlichen deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte* 28 (1983):149.
79. J. Kocka, "Quantifizierung in der Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Quantitative Methoden in der historisch-sozialwissenscftlichen Forschung* (Stuttgart, 1977), 8.
80. Weymar, 199–200.
81. Afanasev, "Vchera i segodnia frantsuzskoi":33.
82. W. J. Mommsen, "Die Sprache des Historikers," *Historische Zeitschrift* 238 (1984) Beiheft 1:63.
83. See B. G. Mogilnitsky, "K kharakteristike sovremennogo etapa krizisa burzhuaznoi istoriografii FRG," in *Metodologicheskie i istoriograficheskie voprosy istoricheskoi nauki*, no. 14 (Tomsk, 1980). Toward the beginning of the '80s there occurred a definite consolidation of bourgeois historiography in West Germany on the methodological foundation of neo-historicism, which assisted the strengthening of its social positions. There occurred, in the expression of the influential West German historian L. Gall, "a new discovery of history," in social consciousness and even in politics: "Die Bundesrepublik in der Kontinuität der deutschen Geschichte," *Historische Zeitschrift* 239 (1984) Beiheft 3:603. However, the fact that this consolidation is linked to an intensification of reactionary tendencies in the political positions of West German bourgeois historiography, as well as in its theoretical-methodological aims, stipulates its fragility.
84. O. Handlin, *Truth in History*, viii, 3, 8–11.
85. C. L. Sonnichsen, *The Ambidextrous Historian: Historical Writers and Writing in the American West* (Norman, OK, 1981), 3.
86. Breisach, 406.

4 Comment on B. G. Mogilnitsky, "Some Tendencies in the Development of Contemporary Bourgeois Historical Thought"

Geoffrey Elton

There is something agreeably relaxing about any recital of predictable and familiar arguments. In these days of repeated upheaval, it is pleasing to meet a champion of the Marxist-Leninist school of history, B. G. Mogilnitsky,[1] who adheres to the rules. Friedrich Engels puts in his obligatory appearance in the second paragraph, and before long Marx and Lenin follow suit. All testify to their ability to make observations of crashingly commonplace and uninteresting force. But their names do, of course, sanctify such statements as that history is the study of the human past with contemporary ends in view, or that mistakes are inevitable. What will be interesting to see is whether the supposed current renovation of socialism will at least lead to more independence and originality of thought.

At least, Professor Mogilnitsky is generally courteous. What he is not, and cannot be, is remotely comprehensive. If there is such a thing as "contemporary bourgeois historical thought," its chief characteristic lies in a persistent diversity of opinions, purposes, and lines of approach. In looking at a battlefield, Professor Mogilnitsky tries to isolate the leading lines of advance and retreat and it is no wonder that he can do so only by rising above the swirl of smoke and fire into a region of unreality. Above all, he helps himself by a severe limitation of the area he takes under review. It is very surprising to find no discussion of that most influential school of historians, the *Annalistes* of France; the brief and insignificant mention of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie does not even touch the edge of that problem. Less surprisingly, historians from Great Britain merit no discussion, though two get in (Lawrence Stone and Peter Munz) by being miscalled American. At least this gap may justify a contribution to this debate from England. In actual fact, Professor Mogilnitsky really restricts himself to two sets of writers – Americans and West Germans, the latter as seen through the eyes of their East German colleagues. This measure of self-denial has the advantage of producing a manageable topic. Professor Mogilnitsky sees "bourgeois" historical thought in a welter of crises because he confines himself to those debaters who seek out crises wherever they go. Especially the American predilection for finding active crises at every step – the inclination to lament, preach, convert, and despair – has proved a snare to this observer from outside. If I may borrow a word from one of the most impassioned obfuscators in the game, what we have here reviewed is not work on history but the temptations of metahistory: not the search for an understanding of the past, but the desire to organize the past for the use of the present, linked to the supposition that behind all historical writing there lurk deeper and hidden positions which it is the task of the philosopher to bring into the open. Again quite unsurprisingly, Professor Mogilnitsky follows those guides who would tell him that bourgeois historians are engaged in maintaining elitist and imperialist faiths. Poor old Theodor Schieder, a man of sense and kindness, even "joins hands with outright fideism and obscurantism." At least he does not rest tedious commonplaces on the utterances of the saints of *his* faith.

At any rate, Professor Mogilnitsky expressly and wisely claims to concern himself with only some developments in bourgeois historiography, and his choice of trends to consider is both interesting and revealing. He attends to four specific efforts derived from the passion for crisis and the desire to give history a specific function in the current concerns of "society": in other words, he believes that bourgeois historiography is in a crisis because it cannot any longer claim to be a major constituent in general ideology and seeks to remedy this decline by investing in general theories that will restore to it an ascendancy once manifest in the great age of historicism or positivism. At the very least, historians are here seen as desirous to be "useful" and "relevant"; more particularly, they are found anxious not to fall behind the social sciences in providing explanatory laws of human behavior and of the processes of experience testified to in history. These, of course, are the supposedly justified claims of Marxist-Leninist historiography which allegedly possesses the tools necessary for discovering the certain laws of the historical process. In effect, Professor Mogilnitsky is concerned to deal with systems that he sees as rivalling his own happy certainties.

He identifies four such systems: the "scientific" cliometry developed by analyzers of quantified data; the employment of supposedly Freudian (sometimes Jungian) analyses of the past by the practitioners of psychohistory who, in this way, hope to find universals under which to subsume individual personalities; the adoption of literary theories of understanding, among whose varied practitioners he seems to regard Hayden White, Hayden's metahistorical fantasies as dominant; and the disciples of Max Weber. (It is perhaps a sound sense of self-preservation that saves him from looking at feminist history.) The first three systems are essentially American inventions of which only the first has found serious followers elsewhere; the last has its roots among West German historians, though some American scholars have given it house-room.

Professor Mogilnitsky seems to have put all four on his list because he regards them as "bourgeois" schemes for the interpretation and structuring of history, but they do not really share any kind of common character. Psychohistory has been cried up as a way of understanding the people of the past rather than the forces of historical development, and Hayden White's ethereal fancies seem to concern the rhetoric of exposition rather than the discovery and ordering of historical processes. I say "seem to" because I have to confess to an almost total inability to gain any understanding from the flood of Graeco-Roman jargon in which he has cast his contributions. To take an example, look at his treatment of Ranke. Of course, Ranke worked with a mind and a set of principles particular to himself, and there are things to criticize in his output. But nothing in White's analysis of Ranke's supposed approach to history even begins to explain why Ranke's survey of English history in the seventeenth century has proved more durable and sensible than most of what has been offered since his day, and has done so even though it was bound to rest on a more primitive state of research. White seems unable to accept that Ranke handled historical evidence more competently and with better insight than others have done because he understood the processes of enquiry which play no discernible role in the theories White has apparently learned from obscurantist deities reclining on a literary Olympus. His approach to the study of the past I must, in my ignorance, leave to others to dissect; those that have done so I find as incomprehensible as the object of their dissection. Nor do I propose here to consider the claims of psychohistory which have often enough been discounted in all sorts of quarters, and rightly so. Mogilnitsky seems here to be reburying the dead.

His real dispute in fact lies with the claims of "scientific" historians and Weberians, and one can see why. The original claims of cliometrics (quantification and model-building) rivalled the claims of

Marxism-Leninism inasmuch as the cliometricians also professed to offer precise and predictive answers to historical problems, answers which in addition were supposed to make historical study relevant and useful to "society." As for Weber, Marxist theorists have always been apprehensive of a system which seemed to derive from Hegelian premises very like their own while arriving at so very different – that is to say, "idealist" – conclusions. I think that Mogilnitsky's rejection of both cliometricians and Weberians is justified but also somewhat dated. No very useful history seems ever to have been written by Weberians, except perhaps within the restricted area of intellectual history (history of ideas) within which Weber first formulated his analysis. As for the "scientific" historians, they have long since retreated from their extreme claims. Most of them have come to acknowledge that their techniques, useful and profitable in parts of the work, cannot be applied to vast areas of the past and to all sorts of questions because the data which their techniques manipulate do not exist everywhere and at all times; the wiser heads amongst them have also conceded that the methods themselves cannot subsume all human potential and experience.[2] Above all, none of the supposed developments in bourgeois historiography have succeeded in providing a convincing set of laws that are seen to govern the historical event; none of their practitioners have in the end avoided the risk of indeterminacy and accident which, it would appear, is Mogilnitsky's chief complaint about bourgeois historical thinking. Since he holds that history can overcome the alleged crisis in its (academic) fortunes only if it can offer assured guidance to future action to the agents of action, he ought to rest satisfied with the realization that the supposed rivals to his own preferred system have all by now retreated from making such positive claims.

However, those among the bourgeois who cherish their crisis and cannot rest content with understanding the past unless they can use it to dominate the present – those, that is, who wish that history were a proper social science – have not been slow to resolve their dilemma in ways that should very thoroughly satisfy the eastern critic. For they have turned to Marx. Nowadays, many of the outpourings on these topics, whether in English or German or French, either follow a straight Marxist line or have taken refuge under parts of the Marxist wing, and this is especially true of American historians panicked by all that talk about loss of influence and so forth.[3] This development, while refreshingly ironic, was in a way also predictable. The Marxist view of the historical process has always enjoyed the advantage of the circular argument which provides assurance to those seeking it. Also, of all philosophical schemes it alone laid claim to being constructed out of an empirical study of history, an obvious honeypot for the industrious historical bees. That study had supposedly yielded a set of governing laws, which laws therefore correctly interpreted and forecast the process. The big flaw – namely that most of the forecasts have turned out to be wrong – can be regularly forgotten or covered up. Even so, it should cheer up Professor Mogilnitsky no end to see the way in which the lost sheep among bourgeois historians have sought the protection of the Marxist interpretation. For the rest of us, so far unpersuaded, this development is worse than what went before just because, as a general interpretative scheme of history, Marxism is both seductive and demonstrably untrue.

I have no doubt that so blunt a statement will infuriate many, and not only those who have adopted Marxism as an article of faith. Liberal opinion rejects outright only what are known as right-wing views. Respect for the doctrines of economic determinism has spread very widely, in part of course because it fits the experience of human motivation but, more generally, because it seems to offer a way out of "mere accident" doctrines without calling for ethereal or sentimental attitudes. Yet whatever its virtues (usually overrated) as a guide to an understanding of past experience, Marxist forecasts have regularly missed the mark; revolutions demanded by their prophets have failed to materialize while others have happened contrary to scientifically predicted expectations. Even in the analysis of the past, Marxism has introduced far more plain nonsense than usable truth. Professor Mogilnitsky is particularly unfortunate in his timing: the moment when the crude perversions of the truth imposed by the Marxist-Leninist control over historical research and writing have been publicly acknowledged in Soviet Russia is not propitious for the elevation of his kind of history over that of others.

In that part of history (Tudor and Stuart England) in which I have spent my life working, the effects of Marxist historiography have been marked. The old orthodoxy which spoke of a social revolution and far-reaching political consequences, more particularly in the seventeenth century, did not originate with Marxists; it was first formulated by the victors in the English civil wars and became entrenched in a whig and liberal scheme of progress from feudal absolutism to democratic liberty. Marxists very easily accommodated all this in their class-structured interpretation, and so the bourgeois revolution of the seventeenth century was born. It still seems to command adherence in a few backwaters. However, for some time now all its details have been questioned and largely disproved by an uncommitted analysis of all the available evidence, only a selected part of which (and that mostly the biased comment and propaganda of the day) had been used to underpin the grand edifice. There is no call here to detail the many objections to the magisterial work of Christopher Hill which have been raised on all sides and by all sorts of historians, though none of them have been allowed to make a dent in Dr Hill's own convictions.[4] Whatever actually took place in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, neither class structure (Marx) nor popular liberty (whig plus Marx) are the truth of the story which for so long they have been allowed to dominate. The bearers of conflict were not old and new groups of men – declining and rising elites – but men of identical background and ambitions, holding varied views on the realities of affairs and driven into confrontation by events, not by class. As for the much trumpeted champions of popular freedom, a wealth of pamphlets should not cause us to overlook the fact that those levelling hopes and millenarian dreams made far more impact on patient paper than on life. The ideological doctrine has proven to be a prison rather than a guide.

That is a particular case, though not an unimportant one. It is, however, desirable to become clear about the real historiographical issues. Marxist historians like to believe that attacks on their constructs arise from political prejudice; being themselves committed to advancing political ends, they cannot believe that those who question their answers act from any other motive. This is not so. My own objection to Marxist history arises in part from the demonstrable fact that it tells at best dubious, oftenly plainly wrong, history and misuses the evidence of the past to do so. I would raise the same objections to other forms of doctrinaire history (for instance, the old Christian or Toynbeean schemes) if they still exercised influence in professional circles. In addition – and in the present context this matters more – I object to all universal schemes with predictive laws because they constitute a false approach to the demands of free enquiry.

Unquestionably, Marx and his followers in their day made important contributions to our understanding of the past, though it seems to me that their useful days have by now themselves become part of that past. They drew attention to matters that had been neglected or at least had been very inadequately investigated, and they offered possible answers well worth the testing. Unfortunately, that necessary testing very quickly became incurably biased because the scheme employed changed from a set of questions to a set of answers. In such cases, temptation always triumphs: possessed of a set of explanations, applicable to any situation, few historians can resist the desire to make it work, with the result that the answer demanded and not the question asked controls the choice of evidence.

Christopher Hill once complained that those who questioned his interpretation hated hindsight,[5] and if that were true he would be fully justified in ridiculing attempts to write history without taking our later knowledge of consequences and outcomes into account. But what is really at fault in his kind of history – any kind of history which operates by means of a universal and law-giving scheme – is foresight, the power to know in advance what the end of the enquiry must be.

It is an accident of our time that the debate centers around Marxism, that secularized version of the predestinarian Christian eschatology which at one time used to claim the power to explain the history of mankind, and which merits the same disbelief as its successor. But because today Marxism is the dominant universal scheme, and because belief in it represents a political stance, any critic of it becomes automatically tarred with the same political brush. I am well acquainted with the experience: through most of my career I have been charged with writing "tory history," history shaped to fit some conservative or right-wing set of beliefs. I do not deny that in current politics I tend to be conservative, but it seems strange that a scholarly career signposted by a sequence of demolitions carried out on well-entrenched sacred cows should be thought dedicated to conservatism. It has been so seen because all those sacred cows stood guardians over readings of the past created out of liberal or radical beliefs. To question the social analysis of R. H. Tawney or Lawrence Stone, or the political reconstruction of Wallace Notestein and J. E. Neale, meant calling in doubt history informed by left-of-center convictions; not surprisingly, though wrongly, such questioning was therefore read as springing from opposite political convictions. But in fact it came out of efforts to read the historical evidence in its own right and without the guiding light of foreknowledge which leads to predictable solutions; and in spite of all the learned objections raised by thinkers who have never tried to do this thing, it can be done. The difference lies not between rightist and leftist kinds of history but between two different approaches to the historian's task: on the one side, questions so framed as to command the expected answer, on the other questions so open that the enquiry can follow the evidence wherever it may lead.

I think, if I may enter a personal reminiscence, that my own political experience has helped me to spot the dangers of the self-validating schemes of interpretation and to the best of my ability to avoid them. At a time when the shapers of the history that dominated the 1950s and 1960s were, for good reason, preoccupied with the threat of fascism and found a refuge in Marxist communism, I lived in Prague – in the last bastion of genuine democracy found in Europe and between the battle-lines. To anyone alive and alert in Central Europe in the 1930s, the fact that both systems on either side of one's existence were tyrannies of the mind no doubt became more obvious than could be the case for eager young minds watching the world from England or America; and of all the parochial places, incapable of looking around without inbuilt convictions of superiority, Oxford takes the biscuit. I think myself most fortunate in that I did not grow up in Christopher Hill's Oxford, and I feel some pity for people whose generous impulses led them into the captivity of a faith – any faith. But that does not mean that I have to let their tendentious perversions of the truth about the past march on without a protest.

However, there is a charge which can be levelled at my kind of history – history which is open, incapable of formulating universal laws, unpredictable at the time, and not to be explained by predictability after the event. That charge says that such history is useless. It does not profess to offer help to anxious men and women in the conduct of their affairs, and there is therefore no point in pursuing it. This kind of criticism lies behind the talk of crisis and the search for positive involvement in the present day; it is a criticism much reinforced by the sight of various social sciences (above all, I suppose, economics and sociology) which gain respect and adherents (and sometimes money) by offering answers and panaceas. One reply to this kind of charge tries to deny its truth: one may still hear it said that a dispassionate study of the past can be a good guide to action in the present. Unfortunately, nothing in human experience bears this out: as soon as even the instructed historian, not to mention the politician instructed by him, seeks to base present action on his learned understanding of the past, hope and ambition and wish-fulfillment take over so that the past again becomes a matrix out of which conclusions biased by interest or ideology are cheerfully extruded. This apparently inescapable perversion of the first intention may well form a chief justification for the use of the great interpretative schemata which at least inhibit the sheer frivolity of self-interest in the reading of history by subjecting it to the constraints of doctrine.

About a dozen years ago I tried to offer to what I call real history – history studied and written for its own sake – a social function in the present. I thought then, and I still think, that I had found a really useful role for the historian in relation to his own day, a role which grew directly out of his relation to the day to which he devoted his studies.[6] I found that role in the cultivation of a skeptical and questioning attitude to all universal claims and major interpretative schemes – to all the faiths which seek to enslave the human mind and reason. And I can only repeat that prescription, the more readily because it makes exceptionally severe demands upon the historian. Anybody can bury his or her doubts and insufficient labors in the tomb of a prophet. Anybody can ease his or her way through the inadequate and ambiguous testimony left behind by the past by throwing bridges of doctrinal faith across the chasms. But to do so is to help other self-appointed guides, even gurus, to deceive innocent mankind into beliefs based on emotion or faith or self-interest, calling those beliefs the children of reason. The present century has had plenty of this sort of thing. It has seen millions suffer and die for the greater glory of false gods, for all gods are false. It is that revelation that the historian, on the strength of his work, can offer to his fellow-men: a sober and skeptical understanding of human error. In addition he can point out that, so far at least, mankind has managed after a fashion to survive, despite all the predictive schemes of history leading to doom with which interested parties have fed its fears. Politicians, social theorists, religious devotees, systematic philosophers, and all the rest catch the silly mackerel with the sprats of ready-made answers displayed as predictable by law. It remains the task of the historian to oppose the particular to the universal, the specific to the generalized, the truth of the event to the construct of the ideologue. I am very much afraid that even a courteous adversary and critic like Professor Mogilnitsky remains too much of a servant of an interpretative scheme to discharge that task as it needs to be discharged.

Notes

1. B. G. Mogilnitsky, "Some Tendencies in the Development of Contemporary Bourgeois Historical Thought," this volume.
2. Cf. Robert W. Fogel's thoughtful contribution to *Which Road to the Past?* (New Haven, 1983). I do not doubt that not all cliometricians will accept his concessions to my pragmatic critique in that volume, but to judge from reviews such a hostile reaction is not widespread.
3. For a useful review of the Marxist penetration of American historical studies, see Norman F. Cantor, *Twentieth-Century Culture: Modernism to Deconstruction* (New York, 1988), ch. 4.
4. Thus the most recent survey of "the age of Hill" – Derek Hirst's *Authority and Conflict: England 1603–1658* (London, 1986) – by its silence expressly denies Hill's classically Marxist reading of the period.
5. *Past and Present* 92 (1981):122–23.
6. In "The Historian's Social Function," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 27 (1977):197–211; reprinted in Geoffrey Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government* (Cambridge, 1983), 3:413–28.

5 A Reasoned Reply to Professor Mogilnitsky's Moves

Peter Munz

I

Although B. G. Mogilnitsky alleges that, in my *Shapes of Time* of 1977, I furnish an "outmoded" (sic!) philosophical justification for all the unscientific and subjective trends he has discerned in contemporary western historiography,[1] I agree with him that the study of history is not just a preoccupation with the past either to satisfy one's piety and perform some kind of ancestor worship, or to multiply social science case studies by taking in evidence from past ages. Like Mogilnitsky, I believe that the proper purpose of historical study is to present the past as series of causal sequences so that ultimately one can understand the present as the effect of the past or, on a lesser scale, explain the later as the effect of the earlier. The historian's job is to study change, and the methodological premise on which his conception of his task is based is the assumption that the relationship between the passage of time and the changes which have taken place, is not random. This premise rules out, as far as historians are concerned, the study of functional dependencies between birth-rates and religious beliefs or between military codes and economic bargaining, be they in the present or in the past. Such synchronic relationships, whatever they are, cannot be causal and are, therefore, not historical.

With the sure touch of a well-experienced historian, Mogilnitsky provides a coherent picture of the most recent movements of thought in western historiography which combine to make it impossible for historians to carry out this task. Only a historian well versed in tracking connections and in understanding their causal and dialectical relationships could have achieved such a consistent account. It seems that Mogilnitsky is indebted to L. Stone[2] for his classification of the varieties of western historiography, or he could have drawn for an equally representative classification on the book *La philosophie de l'histoire et la pratique historienne d'aujourd'hui*.[3] However, it is Mogilnitsky's merit to attempt to have established a causal link between the succession of historiographical varieties.

Mogilnitsky takes as his starting point for the dialectical analysis of the movements in western historiography, the fideism of western historians – the belief that ultimately the historical process is unintelligible. I think that he is historically wrong in seeing this view as it is expressed, for example, by Theodor Schieder, as the result of theological reflection. Whatever Schieder's interest in Berglar's theology might have been, the main reason why historians of Schieder's generation, as well as historians both before and after him, have inclined to abdicate and confine themselves to the study of documents or the elaboration of knowledge about ill-assorted and unconnected fragments of the past, is more profound than Mogilnitsky's reference to Berglar's theology would allow. Theologically oriented fideism has not been all that widespread among historians in the west, especially not in the extreme form in which it is here presented. But factual niceties apart, Mogilnitsky has recognized correctly a stance taken by countless practising historians who pride themselves on their minute and detailed expertise in one field or another, and not only proudly disclaim knowledge about anything else but consider a wider perspective, let alone an interest in the course of history, a vulgar aberration.

Western academic orthodoxy has dismissed the idea that one studies the past in order to explain changes and how the accumulation of a specific series of changes must have brought about the present. There is both a philosophical and a sociological reason for this stance. Philosophically, it derives from historism – that is, from the view that every society and every past epoch is, in Ranke's phrase, "equidistant from God": it is an individual constellation which has to be understood, if at all, from the inside and which cannot be seen as the effect of what went before and the cause of what came after. This means that one can only study individual snippets, and that no collection of such snippets can add up to a coherent picture of how the present has been caused by the past. The triumph of historism is well described by Friedrich Meinecke in his classical work.[4] Such historism goes back to Voltaire, who proposed that the only thing worth studying in the past are the sudden periods of enlightenment, which emerge, like the "catastrophes" of 18th-century geologists, for no good reason.[5] Ironically, Voltaire made this proposal to lay to rest the progressivist and providentialist views of Christian theologians and intended his proposal as a contribution to enlightenment and emancipation from the Christian religion.

Sociologically, this view derives from the fragmentation caused by academic institutions in which teaching is done by aging Ph.D. students who can only maintain their reputation and gain promotion by excessive specialization, so that the abandonment of the study of history has become institutionalized as a precondition of a successful academic career in history.

One way or another, there has indeed been a deep-seated determination among western historians to keep away from the study of history, that is, from studying how one thing has led to another. How deep-seated this is, can be gauged from the following anecdote. My plea in my 1977 *The Shapes of Time*[6] that historians return to the job they were supposed to do and study the past as an interconnected series of causal sequences was sympathetically noted as a some kind of a curiosity by Louis Mink.[7] How curious, he seemed to be saying, that somebody is suggesting that historians should actually study history, when we are now so comfortable occupying ourselves with ill-assorted information about past events in any order we please! He was taking it for granted that we simply want to know what fragments of the past were like, and that we do not wish to know how one fragment was causally linked to another.

Mogilnitsky diagnoses correctly the desire of western historians to distance themselves from such "fideism" or, as we should say more correctly, from such "historism." Many historians, therefore, try to reintroduce social relevance into their historical studies and have attempted to do so by an excessive reliance on the social sciences. He singles out cliometry and psychohistory as examples. It is surprising that there is hardly a a reference to the *Annales* school which, in its sociologization of the study of the past, has presented extreme examples of static analysis and has doctrinally committed itself to a rejection of story telling, of an interest in events and of their sequence. I believe that Mogilnitsky is right in saying that a mere reliance on social science ("scientization") cannot be a remedy for the consequences of fideism and historism. For the intrusion of the social sciences has had an unhistorical result. It has turned the study of history away from a study of causal sequences and transformed it into a study in which so-called historians behave like social scientists who exercise their skills on past societies rather than on present societies. This scientization has moved historians away from diachronic studies. They have moved away from a search for causal relations which would make the past appear as a series of sequences and have looked either for quantified information about segments of the past or collected that information which makes events socially or ecologically determined (i.e., synchronically related) rather than determined by what happened before. With such scientization, the past is made to appear as a series of unconnected constellations which are causally unrelated. The acid test of historical knowledge – as of all knowledge – is its explanatory power. For historians, explanations have to be mainly diachronic, so that the earlier explains the later. If one pursues social science, even though the subject matter may be located in the past, one gets nothing but synchronic relations and, therefore, no historical explanation. Mogilnitsky argues that scientization leads to a denial of science because it analyses structures, i.e., establishes synchronic relations and does not explain events diachronically. This way of putting it, it seems to me, is confusing the issue, for there is nothing unscientific in the establishment of synchronic relations. What he should have said is that scientization of this kind precludes *historical* explanations, i.e., the discovery of diachronic relations, which is a different form of science.

Mogilnitsky has confined his analysis of the trends of western historiography to people who have expressed views on these trends. His case would have appeared stronger had he commented, for example, on the two most renowned paragons of western historiography since the second War, Fernand Braudel and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie. Braudel's famous work on the Mediterranean[8] is centered on the recital of the events of the "middle duration," such as bullion transfer, demographic fluctuations, malaria, trade in grain, and price rises. None of this information stands in a causal relationship to such other major events of the middle duration as the Italian Renaissance, let alone to events of the short duration like the political enterprises that culminated in the battle of Lepanto, which kept the Turks out of the western Mediterranean, which, in turn, had a causal effect on events of the middle, if not on the long duration. The work makes light of political history and neglects ideas, but has an air of originality in it because of the author's Herculean, cosmopolitan erudition about events like grain prices and mortality rates, especially in those more obscure places like Tunis or Cyprus, which earlier historians have tended to neglect but which have the aroma of social relevance. But, viewed in a cold, critical light, Braudel's contribution to our knowledge of how the 15th century changed to lead to the 17th century, is minimal. Le Roy Ladurie is even more of an anti-historian than Braudel. His early work on peasant life[9] consists of monumental statistical information about the balance between food supply and population which shows that nothing much happened to that balance between the 14th and the 18th centuries. A genuine historian would have concluded that, since so much did happen and since that particular balance did not change, the explanation of what *did* happen must lie somewhere else.

Mogilnitsky could have further strengthened his case by looking at the teaching practices of western universities in which there is no or little chronological sequentiality of courses and, as a result of which, students are confirmed in the belief that the past is a series of ill-assorted, haphazard events which follow one another by happenstance. Students only too frequently take a course in the origins of trade unions in the 19th century side-by-side with a course in the role of women in the early 12th century and another in the struggle for independence of one or the other African "nation" in the 20th century. The social relevance is believed to be assured by the sociological methods employed in the study and by the fact that independence struggles, feminism, and trade unions are also part of *contemporary* politics. Mogilnitsky could have further underpined his case by pointing out that this western academic habit of teaching courses in a non-chronological order precludes all forms of historical understanding. If one studies the American Revolution in one year and the Renaissance in the following year and the Fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of Stalinism in the third, one cannot possibly reach an understanding of the historical process. The habit of studying the Stuarts before the Tudors or the modern world before the middle ages, has established itself because it is taken for granted that the sequence of events cannot make sense and that the sequence of one's studies is therefore a matter of indifference. The studied disregard of chronological order thus destroys even the semblance of causal sequences. It is as if our academic curriculum were designed to demonstrate the validity of historism and "fideism."

By leaving out these telling examples, Mogilnitsky actually weakens his own case unnecessarily. He also does himself less than justice in his criticism of psychohistory and cliometry. As to cliometry, he quotes Robert W. Fogel himself about the implicit limitations of quantification. But, again, Mogilnitsky could have strengthened his own case that such scientization is superficial by pointing out that Fogel's method[10] also contains a flaw of principle. It operates with the notion that one can work out the "counter-factuals," that is, what would have happened in any one situation if such and such had not happened. It may well be possible to work out the counter-factuals of any situation and thus conclude, for example, that had railways not been built in 19th-century U.S.A., development would not have been markedly different and that, therefore, railways were not as important as people had thought. But such counter-factual knowledge is, for the historian, an idle speculation; for historians are concerned with what did happen and counter-factuality is, therefore, for them, a non-concept, because the discovery of what might have happened had conditions been different, whatever it may be, is not a gain in historical knowledge.[11]

As to psychohistory, Mogilnitsky is far too kind. The real absurdity of psychohistory is more deep-seated and more patent than he allows. On the face of it, psychohistory is a plausible method because, if it is true that human beings are determined by unconscious motives, then the uncovering of the unconscious motives of Napoleon and Caesar or of 10th-century peasants is a step forward. The absurdity of psychohistory, however, derives from the fact that one cannot psychoanalyze dead people. Psychoanalysis is based on the method of free association. But to be able to associate freely, the patient has to be alive. No amount of diaries and private letters can help a modern historian to make a dead person associate freely. All the modern historian can do is to associate freely himself or herself about the diaries and letters, so that the outcome must always be a psychohistory of the historian's own life – but never a psychohistory of the person analyzed.

Mogilnitsky points out, with justification, that mere scientization is really a denial of a scientific understanding of the past because it results in a fragmentation which makes it impossible to understand how one thing has led to another and thus to explain the present as the product of the past. Given such fragmentation, nobody can understand why the present is the way it is and one must be forced to consider the whole course of past events as a meaningless hotchpotch, and the state we are in at present, as an accident. The ultimate conclusion of these strategies must be that man's condition, at any one moment, is an irrational accident. In this way, the outcome of the reaction against fideism and historism has been actually to confirm both fideism and historism. It is not so much, as Mogilnitsky says, that scientization has been superficial, but that scientization, whether superficial or not, has only made a superficial contribution to historical knowledge.

Mogilnitsky then correctly diagnoses the movement back to narrative history as a reaction against the self-denying and self-defeating implications of the scientization which has taken place. But narration of events is not the diversionary tactics or the counsel of despair both L. Stone (91–92) and Mogilnitsky think it is; but an acknowledgement that human existence is a temporal process and that story-telling about this process is a picture of an essential dimension of reality.[12] Narration is intimately linked with temporal sequence and therefore the call for a return to narrative history is an attempt to reintroduce a historical perspective into the study of the past. A narrative, however, is not a mirror portrait of events as they succeed one another in time, but a construction which does justice to the fact that whatever happened happened in a temporal sequence. In this sense – and only in this sense – it is a genuine improvement on a scientized fragmentation of the past into self-contained slices.[13]

But here Mogilnitsky has correctly spotted a new diversion. If narration commits the historian to temporal sequences, it also opens up a hornet's nest of new problems. Narration involves not only the customary preoccupation with sources and the interpretation of these sources, but must lead to a preoccupation with style, rhetoric, and literary technique. It therefore tends to make hermeneutics and problems of rhetoric into a central issue in historiography. Whichever way historians deal with hermeneutics, there is no denying that questions of meaning and interpretation can hardly ever be fully resolved and that the study of history, focussed on this problem, creates the impression that the resolution of historical debates is, in the final instance, a matter of subjective feeling and artistic taste. Hayden White, whose *Metahistory* of 1973[14] was a landmark in our understanding of this matter, did, however, little to dispel this impression, so that Mogilnitsky can be forgiven if he sees White's work as a contribution to the triumph of subjectivity and deplores the importance attached to poetic, rhetorical, and aesthetic considerations, and the frequently reiterated conclusion that historiography is more of an art than a science. His analysis has thus led him from fideism, via scientization and narration, to subjectivity and thus to the conclusion that western historiography is an ailing and self-indulgent preoccupation with the past.[15] It fails, he says, to provide an understanding of the course of history and cannot explain how the present has come to be the way it is. By and large, I agree with his analysis and his conclusion.

Mogilnitsky's dismissal of the revival of narrative as yet another attempt to escape from true historical knowledge, is, however, simplistic. While a return to narrative solves the problems of excessive synchronicity brought about by scientization, it opens up a genuine new problem. To St Augustine and to Gibbon, narration had posed no problems other than those of bias and lies. But to a modern generation of historians who have all become familiar through ethnography with the fact that there is no uniformity of human nature and that the ancient Romans in their own way must have been as different from modern western man as the Trobriand Islanders, story telling poses a genuine hermeneutic question: do I understand the sources and the original narrations provided by the people I am telling the story of, correctly; that is, do I understand them the way they did understand themselves? And even if I do, should I simply repeat what they told or ought I to adopt a critical stance towards them? And if I adopt a critical stance towards them and, e.g., dismiss a tale of magic as a piece of superstition, what kind of alternative explanation are we entitled to expect?[16] In this area there have arisen hosts of problems which lead far beyond the traditional exercises in source criticism. For Mogilnitsky to say that preoccupation with these matters is stultifying and escapist is about as sensible as saying that Quantum Mechanics ought to be avoided because its uncertainties and non-localities are confusing. Consider the case of one of the most widely read and acclaimed recent works, Le Roy Ladurie's *Le Carnaval de Romans.*[17] In this book, Le Roy Ladurie has taken a story from a narrative source of the late-16th century and retold it by interpreting it with the help of the most modern sophisticated sociological categories. He has brushed the original tenor and meaning of the sources under the carpet, on the assumption that these people did not understand what they were doing. There is, however, evidence that they understood their own story perfectly well. The murderous intrusion of blood feuds and politics into the annual Carnival was at that time a topos. Something very similar happened in the Grison valley a few decades later and that story was made into a novel by the Swiss writer Conrad Ferdinand Meyer and published in 1876. Le Roy Ladurie's insensitive disregard of the original meaning of the story and his blanket superimposition of modern sociological categories gave him great renown among people for whom he made an old story socially relevant, but proved him a narrator who had no truck with historical explanations. If we were to accept Mogilnitsky's aspersions on hermeneutics, we could see nothing wrong with the fact that Le Roy Ladurie has disregarded the topos-like character of the story he is telling. This disregard has led to more, not less, subjectivity. Le Roy Ladurie's *Carnaval* is, above all, a cautionary tale.

II

Good historian that he is, Mogilnitsky concludes his story of the dialectical movements of western historiography, which have led from fideism to scientization and from scientization to narration, with an attempt to explain *why* western historians allow themselves to be subject to these twists and tergiversations when they could, instead, have followed the straight and narrow path of a scientific study of how one event led to another. While he has diagnosed the dialectics which have led from one position to the next, he has not yet explained why there has been this succession of unscientific stances in the first place.

Mogilnitsky explains the dialectical tergiversations which western historiography has allowed itself to be subjected to as so many desperate but determined attempts to avoid a genuinely scientific study of the historical process. A genuinely scientific study would reveal that there has always been progress by acts of revolution and that, thanks to these revolutions, mankind has developed from original communism to a slave economy and then to feudalism and then, from feudalism to bourgeois capitalism and so forth. Bourgeois historians, he argues, are committed to an ideology which denies such progressions, because only such a denial can yield the ideological assurance that western, white, middle-class rule will prevail in the world. A scientific study of the process of history would show that the white middle-classes are doomed.

It is at this point that Mogilnitsky's analysis and diagnosis must be rejected, for here he gets hold of the wrong end of the stick. It so happens that every one of the movements of western historiography – fideism, historism, scientization, and narration – have turned out to be highly uncomplimentary to the ascendancy of the white middle-classes. If the pursuit of historical study in the west has had a social bias and is as ideological as Mogilnitsky avers, it has been a bias which is detrimental to the ascendancy of the white middle-classes and not in their own best interest. Let me explain.

Starting from "fideism," the entire dialectics of western historiography has been caused by a rejection of the view, known as historicism, that there is a law which made mankind develop from primitive origins to western civilization. In this version, the western bourgeoisie was granted a pride of place, even though in its Marxian variant, that pride of place was only to be temporary. Temporary or not, it is not easy to understand why western bourgeois historians should have voluntarily divested themselves of so flattering and self-serving a conclusion. But insofar as they did reject it, Mogilnitsky's "fideism" must be seen as a reaction against this 19th-century historicism.

"Historicism" must not be confused with "historism." "Historism" is the view that everything that has happened in the past is an isolated and individual instance which stands by itself and cannot be made intelligible by what has gone before. "Historicism" is the view that the whole process of history is a development governed by a law.[18] Historicism was widely fashionable during the 18th and 19th centuries. The greatest single solvent of the view that the past is an evolutionary development towards white, middle-class civilization was the anthropological functionalism advanced after the First World War by Bronislaw Malinowski, whose explicit target was the historicism of James Frazer who had believed that mankind goes through stages of development from primitivism to scientific rationality. Malinowski could, with equal cogency, have targeted Marx's or Comte's historicism.[19] Historicism, it is obvious, is very uncomplimentary to primitive societies and politically damaging to the Third World because it sees primitive or, as we are now saying, undeveloped societies as so many remnants of an early stage of human development. Since the Second World War, western historians have been aware of the claims of the Third World and, if there is an ideological common denominator to the dialectics of western historical thought as described by Mogilnitsky, it is the view that all cultures, whatever condition of development they are in, are ends in themselves and not stepping stones towards the next stage. Tribes with communal ownership of land have the same right to respect and existence as modern industrial nations, be they capitalist or communist. The fideism, the scientization, the fragmentation of topics, and the absorption of narration in problems of hermeneutics and rhetoric, each in its own way, underpins this view of human societies. It is a view which is non-evolutionary and non-historical. It even leads some historians to the nonsensical belief that it was pure accident that human history began in the Olduvai Gorge some two or three million years ago, and that the civilization of Manhattan is the most recent manifestation of the line of development which began in the Olduvai Gorge. They believe and teach their students that it could just as well have been the other way round and that causal sequentiality does not exist. In short, they deny not only that there is progress, but also that there is progression.

It is at this point, therefore, that one has to part company with Mogilnitsky. For Mogilnitsky argues that western historiography has shifted from one position to the next in a desperate, ideologically motivated, attempt to "root out the idea that there has been progress." If this idea is rooted out, Mogilnitsky maintains, the ascendancy of the white middle-classes is ideologically safeguarded. But the opposite is true, for it so happens that the various positions held by western historians – in denying that there has been a progression and in insisting on the inherent unintelligibility of the course of history – imply that the cultures which have flourished in the past are of *equal* value with the culture of the white middle-class of the 20th century. Hence, if there is an ideological motivation in the dialectics of the strategy of western historiographies, it is an ideology which is directly detrimental to the ascendancy of the white middle-class. If Mogilnitsky's diagnosis of the dialectics of western historiography is correct – and there are many reasons why one could take it to be broadly correct – his explanation of *why* they have prevailed cannot be correct. For far from underpinning the ascendancy of the white middle-classes, they actually weaken and undermine it. If the past is not a progression towards the present, then the dominant civilization of the present, the civilization of the white middle classes, cannot have any special value and cannot be seen as the condition towards which the course of history has developed. Hence, if there is an ideological explanation of the positions of western historiography, it cannot be the one proposed by Mogilnitsky. If anything, western historiography has been ideologically suicidal in conceding that each fragment of the past is as valuable and as final as the civilization of the western middle-classes. Fideistic, historist, scientistic, narrational western historiography has provided for aborigines, for the proletariat, for suppressed minorities, for tribal cultures, for the feminist movement, a perfect stick to beat the western middle-classes with. Had it been intent, as Mogilnitsky assumes, to furnish a view of the past ideologically capable of supporting white, western middle-class rule, it would have kept faith with the historical methods of Comte and Maine, of Frazer and Marx and Hegel and Mill, all of whom saw the past as a progression towards the science- and middle-class-dominated, brave new world of the 19th century. I shall return to the viability of historicism later on.

If the class interests of the bourgeoisie are so badly served by a historiography which sees the past in a non-progressive and non-evolutionary way – that is, as so many social constellations arranged in a non-sequential and non-causal way – why, one must ask, did the western, white, middle-classes pursue it with the vigor described by Mogilnitsky?

The real reason for their persistence in a pursuit which is not in the best interest of their class is a conception of scientific rationality which is diametrically opposed to that of Mogilnitsky. In Mogilnitsky's view, the aim of science is to provide a model of reality which enables one to make predictions. On the face of it, one cannot quarrel with this description of the aim because it sounds exactly like the description of the aim of science given by almost any text-book, east or west. But when one reads carefully the meaning Mogilnitsky attaches to "model" and "prediction," there appear profound differences with what most people in the west would understand by the aims of science. The first difficulty appears when one scrutinizes the notion of "model." Obviously, and Mogilnitsky would presumably agree, a model cannot be an exact replica of reality. If it were, it would simply be a double and serve no purpose other than reality itself. When people speak of a model, they mean a reconstruction of certain salient features of reality and mainly of those features of reality which correspond to our experience of reality. Thus, it is often said that the models science aims at are models which save the appearances, i.e., are models which do not give a realistic portrait of reality but a picture of those parts of reality which appear to observers. In this sense, the term is used by Stephen Hawking in his recent *A Brief History of Time.*[20] Hawking adds that these models exist only in our minds. Similarly, Bas van Fraassen; writes that since models only save appearances, i.e., account for them or connect them, the aims of science are not a realistic representation of the outside world.[21] For a model to be a model of the real world, its statements would have to be true independently of our way of knowing them.

Equally difficult is the problem of prediction. A scientific statement which makes predictions which turn out to be wrong, is a false statement. But the question is: what is being predicted? When a historian predicts that a certain policy will lead to war, he is a making a prediction which can be put to the test like any prediction in the natural sciences. But in perusing Mogilnitsky's article, this is not the sort of prediction he is thinking about. Mogilnitsky is thinking about monolithic predictions of the future. He is assuming that historians have a model of the course of history which tells them the sequence of stages a society has to go through. The historian ascertains which of those sequences the society he is talking about is in, and, finally, makes a prediction in the sense of saying what the next stage must be. If he finds, e.g., a state of feudalism, he will predict that before long that society will be transformed into a capitalist society dominated by the middle-class; and if he finds a capitalist, middle-class society, he will predict that before long, that society will be transformed by a proletarian revolution into a communist society. This pseudo-scientific method reduces historical research to problems of location. Whatever is being described has to be located somewhere, and, in this methodology, the important question about, say, the reign of Frederick the Great, is whether his absolutism was the last stage of feudalism or the first stage of commercialism. Both Perry Anderson and I. M. Wallerstein have made names for themselves in this field of research.[22] If one supposes one knows the developmental law, all problems of historical knowledge are reduced to problems of location. The only problem for historical knowledge is to decide where, on the scale of events, a given event is to be located. Once located, a simple counter-reading enables the historian to read off both its cause and the effects it will have. The deficiency of this historical method is discussed in detail by Ernest Gellner in his "A Russian Marxist Philosophy of History."[23]

Predictions in this sense are not scientific and smack of futurology, prophecy, palmistry, and necromancy. The reason for the failure of these predictions to be scientific has been explained by Karl Popper in his *The Poverty of Historicism.*[24] It is surprising that Mogilnitsky does not refer to this book because, if not this book itself, then arguments like it have been one of the fundamental influences which have made western historiography turn away from the historicism, and the belief in the laws of development, which were so dominant in the 19th and early-20th centuries, and so gratifying to the class interests of the white bourgeoisie. Popper's argument goes briefly like this. There cannot be laws of development because development is something which takes place only once. It is a contradiction of terms to hold that a singular series of events is subject to a law which states that that series had to happen; for the term "law" implies the repeated occurrence of events and refers to the occurrence of regularities, not to the occurrence of singularities in a unique sequence. A law of development, in other words, is a contradiction in terms.

The belief that there are laws of development is very old and goes as far back as the Old Testament. But here there appeared a semblance of reason in it because the development alleged to be happening and, in that it was possible to predict the future, was a development ordained by God. To God, by definition, everything is possible, including the forceful and inevitable establishment of a series of singular events. When God was left out of it in the 18th century and when it was alleged that the law of development decreed that mankind moved from nomadism to agriculturalism and then to commercialism – or from magic to religion and then to science; or from social relations governed by status to social relations governed by contract; or from primitive communism to slavery and then to feudalism and then to capitalism – the proposition that there was a law of development which governed these sequences, turned out to be untenable. Although on the face of it, uncritical observers from Turgot and Comte to Hegel, Marx, Frazer, Spengler, and Toynbee, thought it plausible enough and merely debated which of these different laws was the true law.

It appeared at first plausible enough that there should be such a law because the study of the past showed that these stages had indeed succeeded one another, and that the practice of, say, magic was earlier than the practice of science and that nomads had turned into agriculturalists, but not the other way round. But a closer examination eventually showed that the belief that the succession of these singular sequences was governed by a law and could not have been other, was due to circular reasoning. Nobody could possibly survey the totality of all events which have taken place in the past. That totality is referred to as *res gestae* and, as such, defies observation. In order to form the notion of a development and of a causal sequence, one has to select a few events and disregard the vast majority of events. In order to select, one has to have a criterion of selection. It has turned out that, in all cases, the stories of the past which are the stories of a certain development, are stories the evidence for which has been selected with the help of the law of development the selected sequence was supposed to prove true. It was not that historians had looked at *res gestae* and after long study had come up with the finding that these *res gestae* had developed according to a certain law. What had happened was the very opposite. A historian had fashioned a law of development then used that law to select his events; and then, finally, come up with the finding that the preselected events proved that the law of development was the very law which had caused these events to follow one another in this particular sequence. The evidence, in other words, was not culled from the *res gestae*, but from a *historia rerum gestarum* which had been abstracted from the *res gestae* with the help of the law the *historia* was supposed to prove to be true. With such circularity it was no wonder that there appeared an abundance of laws of development, each claiming to establish its truth by the story compiled with its help. If one reads the sequence of events which Marx had compiled with the help of his criterion of selection (i.e., development moves from primitive communism to slavery to feudalism to capitalism to communism), the story seemed plausible enough. But if one compared it to a story selected with the help of a different criterion, the Marxian story seemed less convincing.

For these and similar considerations, all finally summed up in Karl Popper's book on historicism, the pursuit of this kind of historiography became less and less frequent and was finally abandoned. However, since Marx was one of the many practitioners of this kind of historiography, Soviet historians have not been able to free themselves from it and, as Mogilnitsky for one demonstrates, not only still consider this kind of historiography and the sort of prediction it provides, scientific, but consider it to be the only "scientific" understanding of the past there can be. Popper's conclusive argument against all forms of historicism and its developmental laws, though Mogilnitsky does not mention it, has never been disproved. Soviet historians and western left-wing historians have endeavored, instead, to dismiss that argument as a bourgeois prejudice designed for ideological reasons to perpetuate the ascendancy of the white bourgeoisie. As I have shown above, the interests of the white bourgeoisie would have been better served by the continuing pursuit of historicism; for some form of historicism could prove that the ascendancy of the white bourgeoisie was dictated or brought about by the law of development to which mankind is subject. By this argument, the demonstration, almost universally accepted among western historians and social scientists, that historicism is irrational and unscientific has to be considered an act of self-sacrifice on the part of the western middle-classes. They have come to reject historicism, even though in every one of its many forms – with the exception of the Marxian variant – it would have paid handsome ideological dividends. This conclusion is not in itself proof that the argument against historicism is sound, for there are many self-denying acts which are anything but scientific and rational. But it must serve to destroy the credibility of the one and only argument ever advanced by Soviet and left-wing historians against the critique of historicism. As matters stand, the conclusion is that, although historicism would have been ideologically advantageous for the bourgeoisie, the conception of what constitutes rational scientific inquiry did not permit them to take advantage of it.

III

Starting with the position which Mogilnitsky describes as fideism, Mogilnitsky sees the whole series of dialectical moves that followed in western historiography as so many flights from realism which he describes as "idealism" or "subjectivism." In his view, both idealism and subjectivism are ideological stances assumed by the western bourgeoisie to buttress their power and are therefore to be dismissed as self-serving, politically motivated stances. Although it is not at all clear why philosophical idealism should be ideologically advantageous to the white middle-classes – and although, as I have shown above, whatever western historians have done is anything but "self-serving" – Mogilnitsky claims that a passage from my *The Shapes of Time* provides a philosophical foundation for this self-serving, idealist and subjective, bourgeois ideology. There is nothing in my book which would justify the use Mogilnitsky has made of this passage. Let me explain.

Like Mogilnitsky himself, I believe that the proper purpose of the study of history is not just to study what happened in the past, but to explain what happened in the past and to see the present as the end-point of the past. This means that one must search for a line of development which led from one thing to another until the present is reached. Like Mogilnitsky, I believe that the initial position described by him as "fideism" and referred to by me as "historism," is essentially an abdication of historians and a confession that the present cannot be understood.[25]

But then the disagreement begins. Nineteenth-century historians had believed – and this is as true for Marx as it is for such right-wing historians as Taine and Treitschke – that historians are like seismologists. It is reported, for example, that Fustel de Coulanges in an impassioned moment, when he was lecturing, leant forward and whispered to his class: "It is not I who is speaking, but history itself!" And Arnold Toynbee called his magisterial interpretation of the past simply "A Study of History." Out there, they assumed, was the process of history. All the historian had to do was to watch, record, and transcribe the *res gestae*, as if he were a seismograph. This naive view had quite intimate links with the then-prevailing positivism.[26]

Whichever way, it was believed that one can study history the way one can watch a tree. According to this view, historians plot their way from event to event and, the smaller the time-gap between events, the more the "mystery is abated."[27] Provided one watched carefully enough, the series of events which were the antecedents of the present would then stare one in the face. If there were doubts and disagreements, they had to be attributed to lack of sources or to a misunderstanding of sources or to political bias and – as Marx never tired of stating – to ideology. Ironically, the only writer who ever gave serious thought to the difficulty inherent in an attempt to transcribe the totality of past events into a book was Leo Tolstoy. Throughout his *War and Peace*, he returned to this problem and suggested, realistically enough, that one would have to use some kind of infinitesimal calculus to determine, after one had recorded absolutely all events, their interactions and the total outcome of their myriads of interactions. Needless to say, he himself did not even try to practice what he had suggested. But it did occur to him that, if one wanted to get at history itself, one would have to attempt nothing less. Even so, Tolstoy thought that one might be able to confine this calculus to human beings. But even this would have been making it too easy. In reality, one would have to take in absolutely – and I am saying "absolutely" advisedly – everything that took place in the cosmos, including the lives of plants and animals, bacteria and viruses, if one wants to tackle the seamless web of reality. For if one left out plants and cosmic radiation, one is presuming to know that they have no influence on genes or learnt behavior. *Res gestae* cannot even ideally be seen as the sum total of all events. For, every event one can focus on is both sub-divisible and itself part of a larger event.[28] A soldier marching to Verdun is an event but also part of the larger event called "the battle of Verdun" and that battle is part of a larger event called the "First World War"; and that War, in turn, is part of a larger event called western civilization.

There is no argument needed to prove that this Tolstoyan project is a phantasy and that no history has ever been written in this way, and that no historian has even so much as attempted it. All historians have instead abstracted and selected from the totality of *res gestae* in order to construct a *historia rerum gestarum*. If one wants to get a historical series from the *res gestae*, one cannot wait and look at them until one detects one. One has to construct a series and a sequence of events. But the moment it is granted that a construction is involved, the problem of subjectivity appears. There have been historians who have frankly admitted their subjectivity and confessed that, because of such inevitable subjectivity, the writing of history must always remain a literary and artistic pursuit. And some have argued that such subjectivity is attenuated and made tolerable by the fact that there can be inter-subjective testability and consensus, at least among groups of historians and their readers. But reliance on consensus merely softens the subjectivity involved; it does not help to establish objectivity. Indeed, once one lets go of the idea that historians simply watch *res gestae* and transcribe what they see, the problem of objectivity requires special attention and a specific solution. If the establishment of a historical sequence is a construction, then the construer starts to play a role. Hence subjectivity: a historical sequence cannot be a mirror image of what happened or a portrait of reality. Like Hayden White, I am a "constructionist." With the assessment of the denseness and opacity of *res gestae*, any history must be a construction. I am suggesting, however, that we go further than White and impose restrictions on these constructions so that one can evaluate them and compare them and criticize them in terms of their empirical content.[29]

Mogilnitsky, although he does not spell this out, is not aware of this problem. He simply takes it for granted that there is a scientifically objective way of writing history by transcribing events; that such transcription can be done, provided one is not inhibited by middle-class blinkers; that such transcription will yield a developmental law which, in turn, enables us to make predictions as to the stage that will follow whatever stage a society is in; and that the ability to make such predictions constitutes the scientific character of the study of history. I am as concerned with the production of historical accounts which are not just subjective impressions as Mogilnitsky is. But unlike Mogilnitsky, who thinks one can watch *res gestae* and detect the developmental law which governs them, I start from a position which faces the difficulty of the seamless impenetrability of *res gestae*.

If one wants to construct a historical sequence, one has to disregard the fact that all events are temporally contiguous with each other. Such contiguity binds them together. But, at the same time, such contiguity binds all events to all events into that seamless web which we call the totality of *res gestae*. If one wants a sequence of discrete events and if one wants to construct that sequence as a causal sequence in which one thing leads to another – and I take it that this is what both Mogilnitsky and I are trying to do – one has to find a causal link other than temporal contiguity. A historical sequence is not just a temporal sequence.

Any two particular events can be linked together to make a causal chain by a general law or a generalization which covers them and establishes the earlier as the cause and the later as the effect. If one takes the generalization that most people wish to avoid tooth-ache, one can link as cause and effect the fact that John has a tooth-ache with the fact that John, a little later, pays a visit to a dentist. There is next to no temporal contiguity between the two events. Nevertheless they are made to hang together with the help of the generalization. General laws or generalizations employed in this way are therefore known as Covering Laws.[30] With the help of such Covering Laws, one can extract a *historia rerum gestarum* from the totality of *res gestae*. The procedure is necessary and rational and, without it, no history can be constructed. I formulated this method of constructing histories by saying that "time is transformed into history by consciousness and that consciousness is able to bring this transformation about by making use of universals." This is the sentence Mogilnitsky singles out because the employment of the word "consciousness" reminds him of the hoariest and most subjective ways in which philosophers have tried to obviate the need to face reality.

The word "consciousness," however, is mere short-hand for the fact that somebody has to make use of generalizations, general laws, or universals in order to find the way from one event to the next, once the hard temporal sequence by which events hang together is broken. My explanation of how histories are written is designed to show that, whatever other factors enter into the process, the composition of a historical sequence is not just a subjective exercise guided either by artistic preferences or political class interest, but is entitled to claim a high degree of objectivity – and that its aim is some form of realism. These intention would have been quite clear had Mogilnitsky not taken this quotation from my *The Shapes of Time* out of context.

All the same, the finding that Covering Laws are necessary for the composition of a historical account is not by itself sufficient to establish a degree of objectivity, for the choice of the Covering Laws employed is obviously not dictated by the course of history, i.e., by the totality of *res gestae*. On the contrary. The suggestion that Covering Laws have to be used could be taken as an admission of the ineradicability of the subjective nature of historical writing. Indeed, the sequences one gets must be relative to the Covering Law. One Covering Law will make one sequence of particular facts and another Covering Law, while incorporating the first particular fact, will link it with a different particular fact as its effect. Thus, if one takes the generalization that at a certain time, most people were masochists, one would have to link the fact that John had a tooth-ache with the fact that, soon after, he took a cold, sweet drink, rather than with the fact that he visited a dentist. If one isolates facts and starts with fact (i), it will depend entirely on the Covering Law one is using whether the next step in the sequence will be (ii) or (iv) or (ix). So where and how do we remove subjectivity and reach a rock-bottom of objectivity in the choice of Covering Laws?

It seems there is a comparatively simple solution to this matter. Historians are not the only people who distill discrete sequences of events from the totality of *res gestae.* Every single human being who ever formed part of the historical process, like a modern historian himself, is given to thinking about what is happening to him or her. Such thinking may not encompass broad sweeps of events, but it does constitute in a minimal way a first effort at constructing small narratives. These efforts are based formally on the employment of Covering Laws, even though the persons who are making these efforts may not be aware of it. Formally speaking, however, such efforts involve generalizations which act as Covering Laws. When a peasant is hungry, he goes home to eat. It would never occur to him to single out the event temporally most contiguous with the swallowing of food at his table, e.g., the munching noise of the child opposite him, as the "cause" of his eating. More likely, he would single out the hunger he experienced when he was working in the field, even though it is not temporally contiguous with his eating his lunch, as the cause of his eating. Whichever way, in his own understanding of the situation, there is a *thought* about which event is linked to which event. Some writers on this matter have therefore argued that the primary raw-material of historical reconstruction has to be recovered by "empathy" – in this case, by empathy with the peasant. But the word "empathy" is misleading, and Mogilnitsky proves that he has been misled when he disparages such "empathic empiricism." But if one reflects on the formal aspect of the process of reconstruction, one can dispense with the word "empathy" and clearly state that one is trying to ascertain the generalization the peasant in question used as a Covering Law. Any intuitive hunch as to such a Covering Law employed by the peasant can, in the last analysis, be tested by research into documents and verified by methods other than a bland statement that one had "jumped into the peasant's mind" or that a hunch is a hunch.

If the historian employs those Covering Laws which were employed by the people the historian is writing about, one is entitled to call the resulting sequence of events "objective." If he is employing Covering Laws which were not employed by the people the historian is writing about, one must describe the resulting sequence of events as subjective. This rule of thumb is completely straightforward and, in principle, establishes a clear demarcation between objective and subjective histories. Pragmatically speaking, it corresponds to a simple observation every reader of historical literature can make for himself. There is usually very little disagreement among historians as to what Caesar thought he was doing when he crossed the Rubicon; i.e., there is consensus as to what he himself thought and did because we know the Covering Laws he himself used. The disagreements and the debates among historians begin when they start being "subjective"; that is, when they start to use Covering Laws other than the ones Caesar employed to explain himself to himself. For then the question arises whether they should use Covering Laws current among 13th-century theologians or Covering Laws current at the time of the Renaissance or Covering Laws considered to be plausible in Soviet Russia.

However, simple though the resolution is in principle, there are real practical difficulties. First of all, it is never possible with final certainty to know which Covering Laws were employed by Caesar. More tricky still is the question whether the employment of Covering Laws which could have been employed by him and which were known to some people in Rome at his time, but were not actually employed by him, would count as an objective or a subjective employment. On the face of it, to pursue these difficulties, one would be inclined to say that a Covering Law culled from modern psychoanalysis could not possibly have been employed by Caesar and would therefore have to count as a subjective interpretation of his behavior. Thus a sequence of events which leads from the Rubicon to the violation of Rome as his mother figure, would be a highly subjective version of the story. But it so happens that we know from Seneca that Caesar was greatly interested in the Oedipus myth and had planned to compose a drama about it. It is therefore conceivable that even Caesar might have thought of his behavior towards his mother-city in Oedipal terms.

If these hermeneutic problems remain to surround the notion of objectivity, there is another question which increases the difficulties. No man is a good judge in his own cause. Therefore, there is no warranty that the Covering Laws known to or employed by the people the historian is writing about are really true. A 10th-century king would think that his power depended on the relics in his possession and he would employ a Covering Law for the events of his reign to that effect. A modern historian, seeking objective knowledge about that king, would have to employ the same Covering Law. But today, in the 20th century, we happen to know that royal power does not come from the relics that are in the possession of a king, but from his ownership of land. We would, therefore, prefer a Covering Law culled from economics to a Covering Law culled from religion and in doing so, we would, paradoxical though this may sound, prefer a subjective version of events to an objective version.

I am well aware that the fact that historians have a great freedom to chose their Covering Law, and that a rule that they must confine themselves to objective laws – that is, that they may employ only those laws and generalizations which were used or could have been used by the people they are writing about – would be an intolerable and arbitrarily self-inflicted impoverishment of our historical understanding. For, as I argued above, people are poor judges in their own cause and it is very common for people to be deluded and use superstitious generalizations to explain their behavior and their thoughts. Therefore, historians cannot be expected to confine themselves to accepting people at their own valuation, "objective" though this may be. But once it is granted that they may use subjective generalizations-that is, generalizations known to them and believed by them to be true, but unknown to the people they are writing about – the door remains wide open to an anarchy of reconstructions. I have therefore proposed in my *The Shapes of Time* (281ff) a set of postulates which historians who employ "subjective" generalizations or laws must satisfy if the stories they tell can legitimately claim to have empirical content and refer to what really happened, even though the Covering Laws used are introduced into the period they are studying and are not to be found there. The most important of these postulates is the Postulate of Sufficient Variety. It demands that there should be sufficient variety between the criterion of selection and the Covering Laws used. For if the events strung together into a story are selected by the Covering Law used to construct the story, there is a vicious circle and hence next to no empirical content to that story. It is impossible to satisfy this Postulate absolutely: it would, for example, be satisfied absolutely if one could discover the Covering Laws used by Marx in a history compiled by Gibbon, or vice versa. Such a discovery would raise one's confidence in the laws, for one would then be sure that the events they link into causal relationships have not been selected in order to prove that the causal relationships alleged to exist by the laws, really did take place.

There are, from time to time, histories which satisfy this Postulate. Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou*[31] satisfies it almost to a fault. Le Roy Ladurie has taken material collected by a medieval Inquisitor in order to determine the orthodoxy of a village and has used it to construct a picture of the personal and social relations existing in that village at that time. He has taken his Covering Laws from materials collected with the help of quite different Covering Laws. Obviously such an ideal satisfaction of the Postulate of Sufficient Variety must remain rare. But the Postulate is to be taken as a goal to be aimed at, and its absolute violation, which is, unfortunately only too common, must invalidate the empirical or scientific claims of any history. There need not be and cannot be an absolute satisfaction of the Postulate. But an absolute violation must be avoided at all costs.

IV

There are three reasons why people study the past. First, the past is studied and retold because of piety and edification. If one studies the past for those reasons, truth and objectivity are irrelevant considerations and in this field poets and novelists, myth-makers and bards usually do better than historians. Second, the past is studied because people want to learn from experience. If the past is studied for this reason, objectivity is not all that important, but one has to make sure that the incidents one wants to learn from are correctly reported and that the comparisons made are relevant. In this field, objectivity is important lest the comparisons be misleading. But since it is almost impossible to make genuine comparisons, the study of history as *magister vitae* need not be taken very seriously. The third reason for studying the past is the really important one. One studies the past in order to understand how the present has come about as, for the time being, the last link in a chain of causes and effects. In this study, the highest possible degree of objectivity is essential.

Mogilnitsky and I are in complete agreement that the really important reason for studying the past is the third reason. We want to trace the course of history in order to understand why the present is the way it is and how one set of events led to another. The diversions which followed from historism and from what Mogilnitsky calls fideism all stand in the way of such study and, here again, I am in agreement with him.

Our differences of opinion, however, are deep-seated and fundamental. Mogilnitsky has remained in the grooves of 19th-century historicism. He believes that one can study *res gestae* as the positivists tried to do and that, if one does so, one will discover that the course of history has been determined by a developmental law, and that nothing less than such a discovery constitutes "objectivity" and justifies the claim that the study of history is a science. Finally, the claim to be a science is vindicated by the kind of prediction which becomes possible with the help of a developmental law. The fact that one can, by locating an event in the sequence determined by the law, predict what the developmental law will decree as the next set of events, proves, to Mogilnitsky, that scientific historiography can deliver the goods.

As I have shown above, the claims of positivism to discover developmental laws in the *res gestae* cannot be sustained. Mogilnitsky's understanding of science is antiquated and he can gain nothing by proving that he is in the good company of Comte, Hegel, Marx, Frazer, Maine, and, possibly, Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee. Nevertheless, his wish to understand the course of history in order to understand the present is a wish

I share. The question, then, is whether one can pursue this kind of study of history and avoid the fatal pitfalls of 19th-century historicism.

With the help of the Covering Law model, one can trace the history of man from the earliest beginning to the present without recourse to a developmental law. If one considers that thousands of different Covering Laws have operated in order to link events, one can see that what we call the course of history or the evolution of mankind is governed, not by one law of development, but by thousands of laws and generalizations about economics, psychology, sociology, and other social sciences. The employment of Covering Laws does not reduce the past to a set of static pictures which happen to have followed one another, and does not amount to a reduction of historiography to a social science. For the Covering Laws establish sequences of events which correspond to sequences of causes and effects that is, aligns events in temporal sequence. Thus we get diachronicity rather than the synchronicities of social science, narratives rather than slices in which relationships are static. Here we can get a historiography which seeks to understand the course of history without historicism. Mogilnitsky, unbeknown to himself, has a point here which, however, he fails to make.

The kind of research this historiography requires has actually been done, during the last two decades, by social scientists who have gone into history. One must suppose that historians have so intimidated themselves and have remained so captive to both fideism and historism that they cannot get themselves to look at the course of history and to take the sequentiality of events seriously. They are also further handicapped by the academic institutions they themselves have created. These institutions break up, for purposes of curriculum organization and professional specialization, all instruction and research into disconnected fragments of the past which are not even chronologically ordered. By contrast, the interest in the past as a coherent and intelligible sequence of events which leads to the present is being kept alive by a number of social scientists. During the last decade or so, there has appeared a growing number of books by social scientists on this topic, studies which show that the interest in the research both Mogilnitsky and I agree should be given pride of place, is very much alive.[32] Curiously enough, in the west, for the study of history, one has to look outside professional historical circles.

One can make this clear by comparing this historiography with meteorology. In the course of any twenty-four hours, the climate in a given region undergoes a clear development. In the morning, the rays of the sun begin to heat the earth and the heat is reflected from the earth and warms the air adjacent to the ground. That air rises and, according to the levels of moisture, will eventually turn into mist and clouds or clear away and allow more sunshine to come through. And so it goes on until the next morning. One event follows another and the link is dictated by the laws of physics and chemistry. There is a clear development. But that development does not come from a developmental law which pushes the changing climate through stage after stage. It comes from the fact that the laws of chemistry and physics determine at each moment the following step. The whole development from one morning to the next is the outcome of the operation of ordinary natural laws, and the sum total of their operations results in the phenomenon which we call the development of climate. The employment of this method constitutes the scientific character of meteorology as well as of historiography, and I would conclude that the absence of this method and the continuing pursuit of the chimeras of historicism and its implicit positivism in regard to *res gestae*, rule Mogilnitsky out of court as far as rational scientific method is concerned. If one were to use his own categories of thought, one would have to conclude that, in a desperate attempt to negate the implications of *perestroika* for historiography, he is clinging to the most retrograde fossil of 19th-century historical method, which western historians, to a man and a woman, have jettisoned decades ago, even though their class interests ought to have made them cling to all but its Marxian varieties.

Notes

1. B. G. Mogilnitsky, "Some Tendencies in the Development of Contemporary Bourgeois Historical Thought," in this volume, 51–52.
2. L. Stone, "The Revival of Narrative, *Past and Present* 85 (1979).
3. Eds David Carr, W. H. Dray, Th. F. Geraets, F. Ouellet, and H. Watelet (Ottawa: Ottawa University Press, 1982).
4. Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (München: Oldenbourg, 1936).
5. See Peter Munz, *Our Knowledge of the Growth of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1985), 133ff.
6. Peter Munz, *The Shapes of Time: A New Look at the Philosophy of History* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1977.
7. Louis Mink, "Is Speculative Philosophy of History Possible?" in *Substance and Form in History*, eds L. Pompa and W. H. Dray (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 114–19.
8. F. Braudel, *La Mediterranée et le monde mediterranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris: Colin, 1949).
9. E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Les paysans de Languedoc* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1966).

10. See Robert W. Fogel, *Railroads and American Economic Growth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964).
11. Peter Gay's remarks in *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), I:13, 63–64 and II:320–28 – unquantified, casual, and impressionistic though they are – tell us more about railways then Fogel's econometric calculations about the part railways did not play.
12. See Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et recit* (Paris: Seuil, 1983); David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); F. A. Olafson, *The Dialectic of Action* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).
13. Jacques Le Goff, in "After *Annales*: The Life as History," *Times Literary Supplement*, 14–20 April 1989, 394, suggests that the writing of biographies will reintroduce a temporal dimension into the writing of history. But Le Goff does not consider the intimate link between narration and temporal extension which holds for all events, not just biographical ones.
14. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).
15. It is just as well that Mogilnitsky seems not to have come across the beautiful book by David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
16. See Peter Munz, "The Purity of the Historical Method: Some Sceptical Reflections on the Current Enthusiasm for the History of Non-European Societies," *The New Zealand Journal of History* 5 (1971): 1–17.
17. E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Le Carnaval de Romans* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979).
18. See Munz, *Our Knowledge of the Growth of Knowledge*, 11, 148, and my "The Unity of Science and the Dubious Credentials of Positivism," in *Centripetal Forces in the Sciences*, ed. G. Radnitzky (New York: Paragon House, 1987). For the 18th-century beginnings of historicist laws of development, see Ronald L. Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
19. On this, see *Our Knowledge of the Growth of Knowledge*, 140.
20. Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (London: Bantam, 1988), 139.
21. Bas C. van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 64.
22. E.g., Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: N.L.B., 1974), and *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (London: N.L.B., 1974); I. M. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974–80).
23. In *Soviet and Western Anthropology*, ed. E. Gellner (London: Duckworth, 1980), esp. 63.
24. Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge, 1957).
25. See Peter Munz, "Finches, Fossils, and Foscarini," *The New Zealand Journal of History* 14 (1980):132–52.

26. See Peter Munz, "The Dubious Credentials of Positivism," in *Centripetal Forces in the Sciences*, ed. G. Radnitzky (New York: Paragon House, 1987).
27. M. Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 106.
28. For the divisibility and sub-divisibility of "events," see *The Shapes of Time*, 31–32.
29. For the relationship between criticism and empirical content, see W. W. Bartley III, "Logical Strength and Demarcation," in *Rationality in Science and Politics*, ed. G. Anderson (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1984), 69–94.
30. For the concept of Covering Law, see *The Shapes of Time*, Chap. 3, also 306n3. Arthur C. Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 237: "there is no intrinsic difference between historical and causal explanations, and . . . causal explanations do in fact all have the form of stories"; "Narrative is a form of explanation . . . . We can reconstruct a 'scientific explanation' as a narrative . . . and . . . an account in narrative form will not lose any of the explanatory force of the original." See also E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), 93, and Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs* (London: Routledge, 1981), 183.
31. E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978).
32. I am thinking, almost at random, of: E. L. Jones, *The European Miracle* (1981); John A. Hall, *Power and Liberties* (1985); Gerald M. Meier, *Emerging from Poverty* (1986); Nathan Rosenberg and L. E. Birdzell, Jr., *How the West Grew Rich* (1985); Richard R. Nelson and Sidney G. Winter, *An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change* (1983); Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (1986); Ernest Gellner, *Plough, Sword, and Book* (1988); Peter J. Wilson, *The Domestication of the Human Species* (1988); and E. A. Wrigley, *People, Cities, and Wealth: The Transformation of Traditional Society* (1987).

Part II
Marxism Reconsidered

6 Historical Process and Truth in History

A. I. Rakitov

1. FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As he feasted with his devoted "oprichniks" in yet another orgy, the Tsar Ivan the Terrible motioned a prominent general, a member of an old princely family to come up and, in front of the company, personally cut off both of the man's ears. Just an innocent imperial joke, you might say. The bleeding guest bowed to the tzar without changing countenance, kissed the hand that had mutilated him, and went back to his place at the table. Everybody went on feasting as if nothing had happened.[1]

In the winter of 1942, with the Germans fighting the Soviet Union on practically every front, General Malyshev, who ran the defense industry in the Urals was ordered to report to Stalin in Moscow. Said Malyshev:

> After a lengthy flight I arrived at the Kremlin at 4 p.m. Stalin's secretary told me to wait as Stalin preferred working nights. I spent the next 12 hours sitting almost motionless until 4 a.m. the next morning when the door opened and Stalin came into the reception office. The secretary announced me. Stalin turned to me and, with eyebrows raised in surprise, asked: "Malyshev? Haven't they shot you yet?" My heart missed a beat, I went pale and had just enough strength to reply: "No, Comrade Stalin." "O.K.," remarked Stalin, almost cheerfully. "Go back to the Urals, get back to work, we need tanks. When we need to shoot you you'll receive word."

Three years passed. During the famous reception honoring the marshals and generals who commanded the armies in the victorious war, Stalin, who had by that time put several drinks under his belt, called up Malyshev, a government minister by then, and asked him cheerfully: "'D'you remember, Malyshev, that summons to the Kremlin in 1942?' I stopped breathing again, reminisced Malyshev, as Stalin went on: 'Those were hard times; and yet we took the time out for a joke, now and then, eh?'"[2]

To conclude the reception Stalin raised a glass of the golden Georgian wine: "Here's to the patience of the great Russian people. Any other people," he went on, "would have long ago turned out such a bad government."

Any nation's history is replete with frightening and revolting tyrants and senseless crimes; yet Stalin's toast stands out by its extraordinary quality. That was not just an ill-advised statement, it was a view of history, a concept that tied the different periods in history into a single process. A historian of the Ranke school would argue that a concept of this type is in the philosophers' domain and one that has long since proved to be useless. The historian's domain is facts and a truthful description of events to answer the question, "What happened?" Many modern historians, however, would reply that a fact may be stated and evaluated as objective knowledge only in a particular socio-historical context. To identify and sort events out into the historically meaningful and the unimportant is far from a simple methodological challenge. On this point, the methods of both Ranke and Weber, who gave preference to non-evaluatory knowledge of history, are ineffective tools of historical study.

The events currently rocking the countries that made up Soviet Union and Eastern Europe may be interpreted in any number of different ways. They may be seen as the reforming of a "great empire," as the crisis of a social system, as the collapse of an unsuccessful experiment that was also the bloodiest in human history, costing several dozens of millions of lives. Yet the knowledge of history and the historical perception of reality is currently undergoing an amazing renaissance both in, and partly outside, the Soviet-bloc countries: an unprecedented upheaval at every level, from historical narrative to historical mythology. In this context, philosophical reflection over the past becomes one with the cognition of history, while the factual description of history could not make a step forward without comparison, evaluation, and conceptual generalization. These generalizations go beyond the formal embracing laws of Hempel-Oppenheimer, do not fit the schematic of the rational historical explanation of W. H. Dray, nor fall under the Marxist laws of the regular changeover of historical formations and class struggle that doom all humanity to socialism and communism. Marxism, which under Stalin and during the subsequent "stagnation period" was imposed by guns and barbed wire, is going through the most difficult and critical period in its evolution. Ranke's question, "What happened?" becomes meaningful only in the context of other questions: "Why did it happen and could it have been otherwise?" "How can and should things happen?" "Can the past and present influence the future?" These questions have been raised before. Answers to these questions have been advanced by the professional historians of antiquity Thucydides and Augustine, medieval chroniclers, the predecessors and inheritors of the French Revolution, the fathers and inheritors of western democracies, yet never were these questions as poignant and of such concern to so many people as they are now in what used to be the Soviet Union and its satellite countries.

Hegel claimed that history does not teach anything. The famed Russian historian V. O. Kluchevsky,[3] while agreeing with this maxim, added that history does not teach anything in the same sense as that the physiology of digestion does not teach you to digest food, yet the same physiology will punish badly anyone who goes against its laws, doing so through his own stomach, too.

Is there at this time any relatively effective historical concept of the philosophy of history or historiography that can answer this question? The analytical philosophy of history represented by its leading proponents has long since given up trying to ask or answer these questions. Its function is to study the logical or heuristic form of the cognition of history, rather than historic reality itself. The Marxist concepts of the philosophy of history have also demonstrated their historic limitations, their ideological propensity, and their tendency toward manipulation and selectiveness of historic facts. There may, at this time, exist no clear alternative to these and other philosophies and methodological approaches to the understanding of history. In thinking over these problems, I have traveled down a very difficult road over the past few decades, yet I do not believe I have an exhaustive answer to all the philosophical and methodological questions of history and cognition of history. Even so, each epoch, whether we want it or not, makes us not only take a fresh look at the historical process from new vantage points but also reinterpret these vantage points. No matter how true the reproach is that historians rewrite history a bit too often, each historian who is not exposed to the pressure of ideology, political myth, or preconceived ideas seeks to find the historical truth. Our own history demonstrates that giving up that truth comes at a terrible price. Even so, at what level can that truth be attained and how does it relate to a particular historical fact and to the historical process generally? Although it is not likely that an answer will ever be discovered to satisfy everybody, I think that now is the right time to search for new approaches to the study of the historical process and to the knowledge of the historical truth.

2. HISTORY, ADAPTATION, STABILIZATION, INFORMATION PROCESS

The less stable a society and the more unexpected the changes that take place, the closer the look we take at the past, for it has been clearly recognized since Thucydides that the future is a continuation of the past.

Anyone who is familiar with the history of any nation and looks at fairly lengthy periods of history will readily see that a particular stable human community will reproduce certain types of socio-historical activities with a fairly great degree of precision over a widely varying period and under seemingly dissimilar situations, even though such activities will sometimes lead to differing results. Accordingly, an historian, especially a modern historian who is interested not only in certain research findings but also in an ability to put them to social use, must try to understand just what determines the stability of types of socio-historical activity. This is especially important if what we seek is not a mere description of a given sequence of events but also an understanding of the same. This approach has an added advantage in that it provides for the most effective translation of historical knowledge between generations and opens up fresh opportunities to form an adequate historical consciousness.

The activity of any human community is, in the final analysis, controlled by latent or conscious aims and purposes, such as reproduction, improved conditions of existence, adaptation to the natural and artificial environments. The latter mechanism – adaptation – is a premise of, and condition for, the former – reproduction and welfare. If the purpose of life is life *per se* and that of an individual existence is creative self-fulfillment, the two above mechanisms of social survival must rest on an understanding of the binary components of the mechanism. The first of these is that both the natural and artificial environments as well as the system of social interactions in the community must be both capable of quick supportive adaptation to changing conditions and capable of stability. In the human community, these two abilities also rest on the binary mechanism of productive activity, as well as the translation from man to man, from generation to generation, from community to community of adequate information that provides for adaptation to the environment, and for societal self-organization and individual development.

The Marxist philosophy of history recognized only one component in this binary opposition, viz., production of material values. Karl Marx saw production as the mechanism connecting Man and Nature, one that provided for the survival, reproduction, and development of the human species. The second aspect, viz., the production, transformation, and historical translation of information, was not adequately realized until recently in the philosophy of history generally, and, more particularly, in the Marxist philosophy. Accordingly, until recently, history was seen either as a sort of chaotic Brownian molecule motion, wherein the molecules were individuals or groups, or as a fully predetermined, fully objective process involving sequentially changing production methods and corresponding socio-economic formations. Man's intellectual activity and his consciousness – despite all reservations and their recognition as an extremely important function – were seen as something secondary. In the case of the first approach – termed subjectivistic by the Marxists – rational decisions, in terms of the historical process and mankind's historical destiny, were pronounced impracticable, as being limited strictly to individual activity which, in turn, was limited by the same activity of other individuals. In the case of the second approach, rationality was seen as a sort of superhuman abstract historical machine that had the iron-clad necessity of a locomotive run amok in dragging the train of history in a predetermined direction, of which the choice was neither up to man nor to mankind. The well-known reservation that history is not an abstract entity but the activity of human beings pursuing their aims and purposes did not essentially change anything, as human activity and its aims and purposes were locked up in "cars," i.e., in socio-economic formations which the locomotive, run amok, dragged along, as it was driven by objective necessity.

The way out of the "subjectivism-historical determinism" cul-de-sac should probably be sought in the second term of the binary opposition, viz., in the recognition of the fact that history is not only production but also an informational process.

The historical process, then, rests fundamentally on two types of activity – technological and informational. Each includes stabilization mechanisms which provide for continuation, and adaptation mechanisms which ensure adaptation to the changing environment. In the present context, characterized as it is by the scientific and technological progress changing man's natural and artificial environment at a breath-taking rate, adaptation to change becomes a prerequisite and an essential condition of social stability. These underlying mechanisms are the reason why, to take one example, the countries of the socialist system became the arena of what is known as perestroika almost at the same time, even though in different ways. Their profound, underlying meaning is to be sought in the recreation and reanimation of the adaptation mechanisms which during the last several decades were nearly fully suppressed by the stabilization mechanisms.

Attempts at, and acts of, deliberately changing the social organisms are not a totally new historical development. Attempts of this nature have been known in ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, Assyria and Babylon, pre-revolutionary Russian, etc. Where such attempts did not lead to a dynamic victory of the adaptation mechanisms, they ended in a total petrification and, subsequently, in the death of society. In traditional societies with their extremely slowly changing economic, social, and cultural-political mechanisms, time gaps between the defeat of reform and the collapse of the socium could be measured in thousands of years. In modern times, the victory of stabilization mechanisms over those of adaptation may have a severe social effect over a much shorter period. Given this statement of the problem, it is perfectly clear that the decisive factor of the recreation and reanimation of the adaptation mechanisms in a period of major social-historical changes is socially meaningful knowledge as the highest form of information.

3. HISTORY: A SYSTEM WITH HEREDITARY CHARACTERISTICS

Assuming the trite statement that men act out of their personal or group interests and pursue their own aims and purposes, we should have concluded that history is either a purely chaotic process, or one that is controlled by forces extraneous to man, which is either a divine design or "objective economic laws." The influence of passions, superstitions, uncontrollable mass psychoses, etc. on man's behavior only serves to support this conclusion. A comparison of the chains and blocks of historical events in different countries over a very long time-period demonstrates an amazing repetitiveness. What is repeated are not events, details, or individual destinies, but, rather, types of activity or the ways whereby large human communities deal with their social, political, economic, or spiritual-cultural challenges.

According to some estimates, some 40 million people were victimized in the Soviet Union over the past 70 years by military communism, the "de-kulakization" campaign, industrialization, collectivization, mass repressions starting from 1919, through 1937–1938, the Second World War, and the post-war years down to Stalin's death. A goodly half of them were victims of false denunciations, while many were denounced more than once. Assuming that there were two denunciations per person and that each denunciation has only one author, we arrive at about forty million slanderers and denunciators to which must be added several million guards, members of repressive authorities, etc. Thus we arrive at a mind-boggling situation in which nearly all of the adult Soviet population consisted of victims and executioners, the accused and denunciators, the arrested and the guards. It may be added here – and historical justice requires it – that such forcible measures as collectivization provoked resistance. There were over four thousand peasant revolts in three years during the height of the forcible collectivization drive. Each generally involved from a few dozen to a few hundred men. Even so the number of those who put up a desperate fight against state terrorism did not begin to compare with those who were its victims and activists. It might seem at first glance that neither Russian nor any other nation's history offers a comparable spectacle, yet that would be an error. Russian history has had periods of deliberate and organized state terrorism directed against its own nation. The aim was generally to suppress any personal or social independence and to establish complete and unconditional obedience to the authorities in every stratum of society. Specifically, the reference is to the "oprichnina" of Ivan the Terrible, the mass resettlement of the Russian princes and nobility, the spoliation and destruction of Russian cities, e.g., Novgorod and Pskov, mass and individual executions, exile, violence done to one's own subjects, etc. This is but a partial list of acts of state terrorism under Ivan the Terrible.

Throughout Russian history, state power, which was deliberately and intentionally geared to the suppression of personality and to complete and unconditional obedience of the population, took a variety of fantastic, horrible, and, at the same time, ridiculous forms. Thus, officers of the Guards, all of them members of high aristocracy, were regimented by one emperor as to the color of the stockings they were to wear, while another emperor would prohibit or permit them to grow beards and so on. Despite their seeming absurdity, these measures were eventually made quite effective by their systematic and large-scale application. Notwithstanding individual upheavals, such as the Russian revolutions of 1905, February 1917, and October 1917, the highly centralized state, resting on arbitrary power unlimited by law, reproduced itself in every period of Russian history beginning about in the 12th century and mounting ever since. The few deviations or zigzags in this overall trend serve only to bring out its grimness.

In order to forecast the future of Russia or the former Soviet Union as a whole based on these generalized observations, it is not enough to proceed from such historically unprecedented current realities as the progress of science and technology, modern telecommunications and mass information, the effect of western democratic political experience, etc. All of this can make radical changes in the naive schemes of historical extrapolations. What is even more important in order to project the historical experience of the past to the future is to have a definite concept of the historical process. In the briefest of forms, its essence is this.

History, or more precisely the historical process, is, in each regional or local case, an evolving system having hereditary characteristics.[4] What this means is that there exist certain stable regulators which determine the type of activity of the particular socium in similar historical situations and the type of its response to certain changes in the social environment. This heredity dictates the structure and mechanism of the activity of social groups, strata, and institutions. I agree with Popper when he says that the forecasting of historical events based on some historical regulators is impossible in the same sense in which, for instance, astronomical events, e.g., the position of a planet in the Solar system, can be more-or-less accurately forecast from known laws of planetary movement. The type of activity in the most general sense, however, may be forecast with a very high degree of accuracy based on the concept of historical heredity. What is more important is that by seeing history as an evolution of types of activity, rather than as a chain or sequence of events, we acquire a key to an understanding of the special characteristics of the history of particular nations.

In the biological world, heredity, which characterizes each individual biological species and largely dictates the features of individuals belonging to such species, is transferred by the DNA molecular configuration that contains hereditary information. Hereditary systems also exist outside of biology, e.g., in engineering, technology, science, and culture generally. In order to understand each such system, it is necessary to identify the mechanism of hereditary transfer, what specifically is transferred, and whether heredity is open to change and, if it is, then how.

The answer to the first question is fairly obvious. What is inherited in the historical process are the stereotypes of socially meaningful activity, the norms, standards, and rules that make up the structure of a national culture and form its nucleus. This nucleus is surrounded by a sort of cultural shell which adapts culture to changing conditions, takes up the effect of other cultures, is transformed, modified, and even "pretends" to be another culture. The shell acts as a sort of armor for the cultural nucleus as it seeks to maintain the identity of the nucleus in the face of any and all changes in history. The cultural nucleus uses the shell as a medium for transferring information contained in the nucleus and to expose social consciousness and the social behavior of every social stratum to its continuing influence. The cultural shell may act as a sort of socio-historical chameleon. One example of the masking role of the cultural shell is the "European" period of the aristocratic culture under the Russian

Empress Catherine II (this was brilliantly demonstrated by Kluchevsky).[5] Another example of the cultural "chameleon" is provided by the official culture under Stalin and Brezhnev, which claimed to be humanistic (despite mass repressions), technocratic (despite an on-going technological lag), and democratic (in the absence of freedom of speech, conscience, and despite total disrespect for human rights). In other words, the second question is also all but answered, since the translation mechanism that carries on the stereotypes of activity is provided by the cultural nucleus, and adaptation to a particular historical situation is provided by the cultural shell.

The answer to the third question is a little bit more difficult. Biological species change through mutation which may be caused by certain physical effects, e.g., radiation. A physical effect acting on the cultural nucleus would clearly be nonsense. The most effective agency capable of promoting the transformation of hereditary mechanisms contained in the cultural nucleus is the national-historical identity: the protective shell can protect the nucleus from most social mutagenes but it is practically helpless in the face of a social identity.

A. Weber and following him, K. Jaspers, advanced the concept of axial time.[6] Essentially, that is the historical period in which a cultural nucleus is formed. Both Weber and Jaspers – like most later authors – were inclined to believe that a cultural nucleus and a culture generally come into being just once and are not open to any radical transformation that would lead to a fundamentally different historical heredity. This theory, prevalent with some modification to this day, is also Vico's scheme of progressively supplanted cultures and civilizations, a scheme which has heavily influenced Spengler and Toynbee. The reader may be reminded here again that history is not biology. Biological heredity is controlled by the mechanism, according to which hereditary information proceeds from the heredity controlling system, i.e., the DNA, to all the other structures of the organism.

The historical process not only leaves room for, but actually displays instances of the reverse movement of information, this latter condition allowing cultural assimilation and interaction. Clearly, the "protective armor" provides the major assimilative function by protecting the nucleus against cultural absorption and deforming influences of other cultures. What we should be looking at, however, is transformation of the features of the hereditary systems characteristic only of history.

On the one hand, a sense of historical identity may give, if not all, at least the most active part of a nation, its awareness of the need for in-depth changes in order to adapt to novel historical conditions. On the other hand, cultural assimilation, particularly in the presence of powerful media for information translation between cultures, may produce radically changed hereditary stereotypes, norms, and standards of activity within the cultural nucleus. The reverse progress of information – from without and into the cultural nucleus – which is virtually impossible with biological systems, is not all that rare with social systems. Recent history gives many examples of that, for instance the Japanese reform in 1868. Another example is the deliberate reorientation of a number of Asian countries toward intensive economic development, creation of high-technology industries, and a purpose-oriented effort to break out into an informational society. While historical mutations of this category are impossible without in-depth changes in the cultural nucleus, they do not destroy that nucleus altogether nor transform it into something different, but rather produce in it major radical changes, while maintaining its basic identity. Given modern information technology, the mechanisms of the influence of identity on the cultural nucleus are stimulated, maintained, and sometimes "launched" by assimilative processes through which such mechanisms are influenced by other cultural-civilization systems. It follows, then, that a sense of national-historical identity comes into being against a background of information-flows of an extremely intricate configuration. Once it comes into existence, however, it does not inevitably produce radical social changes. History, figuratively speaking, is strewn with aborted "perestroikas" and attempts at reforms and changes almost as much as a battlefield is strewn with dead bodies. Accordingly, it would be intriguing to look at the historical process from the vantage point of historical heredity and to identify the mechanisms of the rise, fall, and success of deliberate, purpose-oriented historical reforms and changes.

Clearly, history should be seen in terms of human activity, and of the rise, functioning, and destruction of progressively replaced economic structures, political and legal institutions, values, world outlooks, and ethic standards. A perception of history as an information process or a dynamic informational system with hereditary characteristics does not mean that we have to, for the thousandth time, give up existing approaches and rewrite history anew. But by seeing history from that vantage point, I am confident we can identify such novel aspects to it and such mechanisms that will allow a new understanding and a new evaluation of some well-known facts and relations and a new perception of historical perspective in the visible future.

4. THE TRUTH OF THE HISTORICAL PROCESS AND THE TRUTH OF AN HISTORICAL FACT

History may be seen either as a temporal sequence of interconnected or random events or as a continual process infolding within certain time intervals. The first approach sees an historical fact as a truthful description of historical corpuscles, i.e., events. The second approach treats description as a reflection of the historical process. These two opposing approaches provide the terminal points for a broad range of more-or-less alternative cases.

Historians of the Ranke school have always believed that the function of an historical study is to identify true historical facts. What is of particular importance to us right now is to answer certain questions: How and at what level is historical truth established? Is the truth possible only in terms of facts or in terms of the description of the historical process? Is it compatible with implicit and explicit evaluations or does it rule them out altogether? These are not idle questions.

The all-embracing interest in historical facts and historical evaluations now prevailing in Soviet society and Eastern Europe stems precisely from the fact that the processes currently underway in these regions involve the rise of a new sense of historical identity that can become a powerful factor for a transformed cultural nucleus. It is precisely the recognition as truthful of those particular facts and evaluations which were previously rejected by the cultural nucleus, that gives them an impulse which allows them to break through the protective shell and turn into powerful historical "genes" that allow mutation. From this point of view, truthful conceptions of the historical process could become even more effective as a medium for transforming social norms and stereotypes of social-historical activity. It is for this reason that, in a starving, freezing country that has been pushed by an economic crisis to the verge of despair, the battle to determine who possesses the historical truth is waged sometimes as furiously as the mere struggle for existence. Those who have studied the orations of the French Revolution and the famous speeches of contemporary French parliamentarians will have easily noticed that their historical analogies generally involved republican virtues and the personalities of Greek and Roman history. These people relied on French pre-revolutionary history much less, even though it was not taboo and had not been deliberately and intentionally distorted as was later the case with the Soviet history of the past seventy years. It is for this reason that a sense of historical identity in what was formerly the USSR is forming largely around the analysis of the period immediately before the 1917 revolution and the seventy years that followed it. A deliberate and politically oriented falsification of history had been directed toward this period on an unprecedented scale.

Laymen might think that identifying the truth of an historical fact is a relatively simple job. Professional historians, however, know only too well that this impression is erroneous. To identify the truth of a fact, it is necessary to establish the truthfulness of the material sources and to have a reliable model of the historical fact as well as a reliable interpretation method. It should be remembered that the information contained in a material source about the simplest event comes from either an "insider" or an "outsider." Accordingly, a distinction should be drawn between an inside and an outside description of an event. Each such description is also dictated by the socio-historical stand of the informant, hence by the evaluations he is guided by in selecting the details and the sequence of events he comes across in their descriptions. To use a relatively simplistic typology of facts, they may be divided into spatial facts ("where" the event occurred), temporal facts ("when" it occurred), quantitative (facts answering the question "how many" or "how much"), and also essential facts that answer the question, "What happened?" Even facts of the first three classes are frequently unintentionally distorted. As the facts of the last class, a true answer to the question, "What happened?" is frequently beyond both observers of, and participants in, an event. There are any number of reasons for that, as is well known.

It is even more difficult to arrive at a true knowledge of what is known as motivational facts, which involve the motives, aims, intentions, and guidelines followed – consciously or unconsciously – by historical persons. Clearly, it is facts of this class that offer the most interest in terms of "learning lessons" from history. Then again, the selection of historical facts is a very complex and theoretically and conceptually loaded issue. The sense and consequences of major historical transformations cannot be grasped in terms of facts, even if truthful: what is needed is truthful knowledge of the historical process. Once it is recognized that history is not a mere sequence of events, but a complex and polystructural process, we inevitably have to recognize that truthful knowledge of that process cannot be arrived at by just summing up historical facts, and is not reducible to facts. As is known, it comes from a complex critical and constructive activity of the historian as he selects and evaluates material sources, compares and analyzes facts, sorts out essential from non-essential facts, advances hypotheses, and thereby arrives at a particular view of the historical process. Clearly, a truthful knowledge of the historical process must not run counter to true historical facts yet the existence of alternative or even contrary material sources and interpretations frequently makes a single reconstruction of the historical process a transcendentally complicated challenge. One can be as ironic as one wishes about philosophizing historians who try to conceptualize the historical process; but the issue is, "Is historical knowledge at all possible without such conceptualization, particularly if the reference is to knowledge of lines rather than points, of processes rather than individual facts?"

The facts described at the beginning of this essay, as well as the thoughts on mass purges and mass denunciations, may horrify or disgust, excite moral indignation, give rise to thoughts about historical ethnogenesis, or provide plots for historical dramas. However, neither taken separately nor together, nor even supplemented with hundreds of other facts, would the facts provide an equivalent to the true understanding of the historical process unfolding within the framework of Russian history. In order to suggest such an understanding, it is necessary to draw an invisible hypothetical trajectory connecting these visible facts, and to evaluate dozens of other competing facts and episodes from our history. Finally, it is necessary to engage in the extremely complex process of selecting a general historical concept that would permit facts to be classified as essential and non-essential, dominant and recessive. Only then would we be able to view historical facts as the empirical basis for a general understanding of history, and for relating a truthful knowledge of process with a truthful knowledge of fact.[7]

The above-mentioned facts of the behavior of Ivan the Terrible, Stalin, etc., may be seen in terms of the official apology of power, in which case they come through as a mere anomaly that underlines the revolting weaknesses of the "great" men as they perform a "great" historical mission. If, on the other hand, these facts, the regularity demonstrative of uncontrolled tyranny, the despotic humiliation of personality, the absence of any trace of a man's right to defend himself, and the unbelievable power of the despot not only over the bodies and actions, but also over the minds of men – if all of this is seen in terms of the formation of the hereditary mechanisms of the cultural nucleus, then we end up with a definite image, a clear tendency that suggests the implicit motivation for the actions of generations of Russian rulers. This tendency is the desire to inculcate total obedience – self-negation, the negation of one's personality – in every member of society to the supreme ruler, a policy aimed at indoctrinating in men the desire to serve and please tyrants with maximum devotion. In actual history, as it was played out, this tendency obviously met with resistance, yet even in the face of occasional acts of opposition it made its way through the history of a whole nation, developing, as it did so, into a standard of behavior, thinking, and consciousness, a stereotype of activity, a standard of accepted and sanctioned conduct which was part of the cultural nucleus. In the words of Professor Chanyshev, who is both a fine historian of philosophy and a fine poet, "Even in the most furious of mutinies, as we broke off the deadening anchor chains, we bowed to fresh lords and glorified new tsars."[8]

Today, at a time when our society is working to developing a sense of historical identity that may promote a radical transformation of our cultural nucleus, an understanding of the truth of the historical process is changing from being an academic problem to being an issue of social survival. There is a possible adaptation to novel conditions that require a really democratic society, rehabilitation of the individual now oppressed by a thousand years of despotic rule by individuals and by the group, and a reawakening of private initiative, both political and entrepreneurial. Without these conditions, at a time when the most highly developed nations of the world are becoming an information society, our society will be destined to more than just stagnation: it will be destined to rapid and irreversible decomposition, degradation, and an exit from the historical arena at least for the visible future. Will the long-awaited rejuvenation take place? Will the much vaunted "perestroika" become a reality? These are not easy-to-answer questions. I do not believe pessimists because I am, by nature, an optimist. I do not believe optimists: I know that great crises have occurred throughout history, strewn as it is with the vestiges of aborted "perestroikas," in which a sense of socio-historical identity rose to a true understanding of historical destiny and historical experience of the given socium to become the most potent factor for that socium's transformation. It is because of this that the issue of true historical facts and, to an even greater degree, of the true knowledge of the historical process, comes through as the tool that can make knowledge of the past influence the present and the future.

Russia has known a period in which the traditional course of its historical process was poised on the verge of a giant historical mutation. This was the time from February to October, 1917, when Russia was run by the Provisional government which was implementing meaningful democratic reforms. Today's crisis is the end result of the unique attempt undertaken by Lenin and his party to turn Russia back to its traditional course of authoritarian government, supplemented with industrialization and farm collectivization. This odd symbiosis could not have come about without a deliberate distortion of the nation's historical consciousness and sense of historical identity, without a distortion of historical truths. Right now, when occasional flashes of hope repeatedly alternate with dark shadows, when political passions grow in tension with every passing day, an understanding of the historical truth in terms of fact and of process has developed into a meaningful mechanism for a new, accelerated formation of an historical identity. Right now it is difficult to predict how adequate this identity will be, and whether or not our society will not go back again, accustomed as it has been through its thousand years of history to stagnation more than to progress. That, however, must not get in the way of trying to grasp for the historical truth. God did not give reason to Man to wail and complain, but to enable him to understand and act.

Notes

1. See Y. A. Solovev, *Life and Acts of Ivan the Terrible* (Moscow, 1893). See also A. I. Rakitov, *Historical Knowledge* (Moscow, 1987), 210.
2. Personal reminscence told me in 1947 by General Malyshev's closest collaborator Tamara Avakian, who died fifteen years ago at the age of eighty.
3. V. O. Kliuchevsky, *Western Influence in Russia after Peter*, in *Collected Unpublished Works* (Moscow, 1983).
4. See A. I. Rakitov, "Systems-Logical Analysis of the Concept of Heredity," *Philosophical Issues*, No. 10 (1974), and *Philosophical Problems in Science* (Moscow, 1977).
5. *Western Influence*, 112.
6. A. Weber, *Kulturgeschichte als Kultursoziologie* (Leiden, 1935); K. Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Zurich, 1949).
7. See *Historical Knowledge*.
8. Unpublished verse (1965), printed here in translation (by the author of this article) by permission of Professor Chanyshev.

7 The Subject in the Historical Process

A. V. Margulis

There is a fairly precise and deep thought in Karl Marx to the effect that people are the authors and actors of their own drama, which is history. And it is part of this idea that every people is the creator of its own historical drama, its historical fate and specific encounters. One feels this especially sharply when one regards those generations that became the authors and actors of the more than seventy years of Soviet history. What was the nature of the historical role played out by us? To what degree was this role really ours, and for us? Everything that is connected with this period is now actually being thought through, and its essential points are being subjected to many interpretations – which is completely natural, for we are speaking of quite an extraordinary, searching stage of the world-historical drama of human evolution that has more than local significance. We, too, propose to offer the reader some thoughts on this subject.

The analysis of such complex and extremely contradictory periods of the history of any people inevitably lays bare an eternal problem – the problem of the meaning and nature of the social existence of man. The actualization of a philosophical rethinking of the dramatic nature of historical existence becomes especially intense when such an optimistically and cheerfully conceived epoch of a "bright future" ends up in a crisis, when *Finis coronat opus* is so definitive. In such circumstances there arises before all the task of an objective-critical approach towards thinking through the essence of that system of actual arrangements which determined the practice of the organization and the functioning of the social life of what was until recently "Soviet" society. Of course, one should speak not about *declared* social orientations, but about the actual arrangements and the true nature of its fundamental approach in practice and in ideology, which defined the major direction, the choice of corresponding means and methods of the organization of its whole system of social activity, and which emerged as its practical regulator. What essentially was this approach? What criterion emerged from all this as decisive?

In reality the strategic orientation was essentially fairly simple and comprised the fact that the whole system of man's life-activity in social groups, collectives, institutions, and other groupings was regarded, planned, and organized through the consciously and directively expressed arrangements for a domineering and primary transformation of the objective conditions and factors of existence, the nature and logic of which change would secure and determine the necessary development of the subject, man. In such an approach, the external objective factors of his existence, actual conditions, appear as the primary and prioritized foundation for the organization and functioning of the whole life-activity of man, and not man himself.

One can define such an approach, in our view, as an *objectifying approach* that posits as well a definite system of social principles, forms, and methods for the organization of social life. Its pivotal foundation is the assumption that man might be the *means* of creating, of producing common social assumptions and objective conditions of existence, but he is not the real subject of his own life. Man is transformed from being the end of social existence, the measure of all things, into the means of their creation on the societal level.

Thanks to the specific system of social organization and its corresponding ideological foundation, authoritarian by its nature, man comes to be seen first of all as the objective means for rolling over his own life forces into "more significant" objective factors of the social system – its material factors of production, its means of war, etc.

In spite of the original way this approach was actualized in our own history, it was by no means an historical novelty. This actualization was only one specific form of a deeper and general regularity – the subject nature of human existence, of man's social history. Any social system is immanently characterized by and is distinguished from any other by the method and degree of the actualization by man of himself as the authentic subject of his social and individual existence: when the whole system of social relations and institutions, directly or indirectly, to a preponderant or limited degree, emerges as a means, a factor, an instrument for the self-actualization of man as the subject of life-activity.

Man is the real and direct subject of social life only when he is the active and free creator of the whole system of factors and conditions of his own social existence (either ontogenetically or philogenetically, historically). Man's world is the world of his objectified, reified activities or his actual activities, the world of the real wealth of his life-manifestations. Therefore, man's existence is not something abiding outside him; on the contrary, it exists thanks to him, here and now, as his reality. He is the sovereign subject of existence when his sovereignty is each time constituted by his activity in the system of social relationships and regulating institutions, and when the degree of his sovereignty is the determinant of the degree of realization of his subjective possibilities. Trusting his social fate to his social organs, man cannot but have the necessary and sufficient possibilities to influence the fate of those social organs as well.

Precisely in the mechanisms, the means of man's interactions with the whole system of social subjects, are contained the bounds of the fullness of the actualization of the social potentialities of his subjective functions. Through them, the relationships of subjectivity can be diminished or enhanced, to the point of transforming the subject into a self-sufficient subject, or, in the opposite direction, predominantly into the object of social regulation by means of various social norms and forms, ranging in nature from democratic to authoritarian-despotic. Therefore, to the different phases of the individual, the different phases of the historical development of man, belong different levels of his existence as the subject of social life-activity. Thus, if man in medieval societies was mainly the object of social regulations, from the time of the Renaissance not only was a spiritual orientation to man reborn that regarded him as the measure of the material factors of existence, but distinct social forms and enabling mechanisms evolved for the development of man as the subject of free choice and activity within the nevertheless real limitations of this or that social system.

In our view, we must emphasize the main, clearly marked tendency of transition: from the condition of man as predominantly an existential object to that of subject, the essential characteristics of which are immanently connected with the nature of his free self-actualization in the *socium* and with the degree of the social guarantee provided his sovereignty in society. Now the distinct stage of the actualization of his social sovereignty and freedom is, not only an essentially significant moment for his singular, individual existence, but a factor as well for the integrity of the functioning of these specific social forms of his life. And although the degree of the subjective mode of existence varied greatly in the social systems of the 17th to 20th centuries, the tendency to affirm it unfolded and dominated, in spite of all the authoritarian-totalitarian twists in the history of this time.

In addition, historical experience clearly testifies that, of the limitations of the potentialities and functions of man as the subject of social life, his transformation predominantly into the object of social regulations is realized by means of the readdressing and concentrating of these functions, first of all in the organizational system of society, in its structural elements, mechanisms, and forms, frequently powerfully usurping or limiting these functions and therefore, as it were, replacing man as the subject of social life. It is really here that the mechanisms are concealed that transform man from the end, the self-sufficient goal of history, into the mere means for the realization of social-group interests, that transform him as well into an object of regulation, and determine the predominantly objectified nature of his social existence.

Soviet experience clearly demonstrates metamorphoses of this kind, although the spiritual intention of these metamorphoses at first pursued quite benevolent and progressive goals. And in the strategy of socialist orientations, the disposition towards man as the real subject of social life was proclaimed as a basic, yet Marxist, principle – that the freedom of each is the condition for the freedom of all – defining the humanistic purposefulness of the doctrine as a whole. That is how it was in theory, as an ideal, as a strategic goal; but tactically, in actual practice, in the choice of means and in the modes of creation of a socialist system, this ideal disposition was turned into its opposite. That's how it really was: the road to hell was paved with good intentions. This very experience was contradictory, therefore, but also instructive in the dramatic nature of historical existence, above all in that the subjective and objective orientations in the organization of the social process of life-activity were paradoxically interwoven in it. Let us briefly examine their dynamic.

The very attempt at grandiose social reconstruction in Russia, where for long centuries the people as a whole had not been a sovereign subject, where historically it had emerged preponderantly as the object of socially domineering forces, could not help but collide with a complex network of factors, objectively and subjectively obstructing such a reconstruction.

In the first place, this had to do with traditions and the level of economic development in Russia, where the degree of economic freedom enjoyed by the subject of production, of economic life, was extremely limited, as much by the multiple structure of economic forms as by the narrow finitude of the scale and depth of the civilizing influence of bourgeois productive relationships. V. I. Lenin, referring to the degree of Russia's economic development, directly emphasized that in a material, economic, productive sense, we had still not reached the "threshold of socialism."[1] This "threshold" was the actual reality of Russia, with its multiple economic structure, its insignificant minority of industrial proletariat and immense majority of peasantry, its lack of developed capitalist relations, capable only of objectively attaining the formation of a future subject of socialist transformations. Hence, after October of 1917, there immediately arose a task of an unprecedented nature, to secure the completion of the capitalism that had not yet come to pass, or as yet could not, as a means of specific transitional forms, which might subsequently open the possibility of directly socialist transformations. The real situation had to be taken into account, the real level of social development of the fundamental mass of Russia's population, of that actual mass-subject in whose interests socialist ideals were supposed to be actualized.

However, in the actual process of post-October transformations the tactic of introducing socialism from above prevailed at first, with the support of two basic forces – the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses and the political power of the proletarian state. Here is how Lenin described the situation four years after the October overturn: "We were counting on, or it might be truer to say, we proposed without sufficient accounting, by means of the direct orders of the state, to organize the state production and state distribution of goods in a communist manner in a small-peasant country" (36:303).

There is no need, nor even possibility, to dwell on the reasons for this in the present article. Here it is important for us only to point out that the Bolsheviks' pre-revolutionary tactic concerning the necessity for creating the civilized pre-conditions for socialism, and the actual tactic used for "introducing socialism," were social dispositions of a mutually exclusive nature. The former was a subjective tactic oriented to the actual mass-subject, for the civilizing mission of the capitalist mode of production, not only in the development of the specific material conditions of existence, but even mainly in essentially changing man himself as the subject of social existence, as the real bearer of the potentialities for transforming the social conditions of his existence. This tactic posited the creation of socialism with that human "material" which would already have been brought into being, for the affirmation of socialism is a genuine growth, the development of the social possibilities for the self-perfection of the working man, of the degree of his social freedom and sovereignty, of the wealth of his life forces. In this case, socialism would not be an externally imposed scheme, doctrine, ideal, but an actual transformation by the masses of their own social existence, illuminated by scientific analysis and by a prognosis of the real tendencies of these transformations. The fundamental mass of the people is their authentic subject, whose interests the whole system of social organs including the state would serve.

The tactic of "introducing socialism" emerges from a contrary disposition, from an objectifying orientation to man, who is seen as the means for realizing a certain socialist scheme for future existence. The party-political system of authority is proclaimed as being, and actually emerges as, the properly socialist subject. It was the party that became the basic organizer of social and economic changes, their conscious articulator and actively performing subject, acting predominantly by political means, often without taking realistic account of the level of society's economic development, or of the needs, interests, and actual value-orientations of the fundamental mass of Russia's population. Hence the inevitability of using the means and methods of force in the organizing and functioning of society. The social practice of War Communism immediately testified that it was just such an approach that was attempted in 1918–20.

However, the crisis character of the very nature of the objective tactic could not but declare itself in the very near future. And it soon let itself be known in rebellions and mutinies, a decline in the interest of the producer, a prolonged general worsening of the whole social situation in the country. The fiasco of the tactic of accelerated "introduction of socialism" by administrative-political means struck Lenin as showing that one could not deceive history, nor could one take it by Red Army assault, that a prolonged siege was necessary for the social prerequisites of socialism to come to fruition. He therefore decisively launched the New Economic Policy, the kernel of which consisted of the idea that the people, the working masses, should find themselves as the defining subject of social transformations, only in the course of which might it be possible to complete qualitative root-changes as much in the objective factors of existence as in the subjects themselves.

Along with this – and it was completely natural – Lenin insisted categorically on a basic reexamination of the functions of the party-state apparatus, basing himself on the principle that policy did not exist for the apparatus, but the apparatus for carrying out policy, which was itself the means for reexamining and correcting the relations between classes, the means for realizing the needs and aspirations of the masses (43:373). Consequently the NEP could become a means for "completion" of the economic prerequisites of socialism only because it connected this completion with the genuinely transformational activity of basic social groups from the people as a whole, as the subject of their own historical movement. With this, for the first time in Russia's post-October social practice, a transition was effected from a predominantly objectifying to a predominantly subjectifying disposition in the strategy and tactics of socialist transformations, and this made the changing of objective conditions, the objective factors of existence, dependent not on the disposition of the apparatus, but on the real position and condition of the forming subjects themselves, the people as a whole.

Lenin grasped very quickly the immense danger of the bureaucratization of social relations – and he wrote and spoke of it obsessively in almost all his writings and speeches of 1919–23 – "communist rule by decree," "communist arrogance," the absolutization of the party's significance and that of the state apparatus; for, in his words, all this led to one of the greatest and most terrible dangers for the party, the danger of splitting off from the masses, losing their trust, and consequently also the perspectives of the revolution itself. Unfortunately, these premonitions of his, like his appraisal of the experience of war communism, his reconsideration of the tactical positions for the building of socialism in the period of NEP, did not serve as an instructive lesson.

Moreover, the approach to "introducing socialism" by exceptionally accelerated means counter to the very essence of the socialist idea – an approach that was "worked out" in the period of War Communism – was again actively utilized from the end of the '20s in making out the basic dispositions for subsequent social practice. The objectifying tactic began to be considered as a strategy, and the socialist forms for its realization were identified as properly socialist, first of all because this corresponded to the nature of the social practice of Stalinism, the ideological sanction for which was the objectifying approach to the organization and functioning of the social life of society, and the instrumentality of this approach was the party-state apparatus, which was constantly growing and extending itself in its functions and tasks. The Leninist idea – "give us an organization of professional revolutionaries and we will turn Russian completely around" – was adopted and realized in a uniquely Blanquist variant, and in practice began to take shape as an all-embracing and severe centralization and a system of administrative and downright repressive means that corresponded to its essential nature. In the long run, this led to a strengthening of the old and formation of new undemocratic, authoritarian traditions in the mode of life of the various social groups and segments.

Asserted in practice as well as in ideology, this disposition towards the working man as a means for the creation of state-collective conditions and factors of social existence – and the party-state apparatus turned out to be the real ruler and executor of these – had quite profound consequences for the people as a whole as well as for the apparatus itself, and on the whole for the formation of the dead-end tendencies and mechanisms of social development connected with the objectifying strategy for the establishment of socialism. First of all, it was practically and theoretically established that the social system had indisputable priority, the creation and development of which, automatically and in a pre-ordained manner, so to speak – thanks to the powers inherent in the state-collective factors of existence – secured the achievement of a "bright future." This being the case, people had to perform strictly what was prescribed by this or that state office, which as a functional element of the system of "objectifying regularities" was empowered to lead them into the "kingdom of socialism."

Consequently, the social system's priority, understood as the priority of state-collective conditions and factors of existence, would inevitably condition the defining role of the civil-service, the state-bureaucratic apparatus, as the subject of social development. There took place an essential limitation of the authoritative functions of the people as a whole in all spheres of society, readdressing these functions to the account of the apparatus, which according to the accepted logic of development aspired to concentrate in its own hands the whole possible amplitude of power in the economic, social-organizational, and spiritual spheres of social life. The policy it worked out and actualized, it represented as "authentically socialist" even when it opposed the interests and needs of society's fundamental social groups, i.e., when it was practically speaking merely a policy advantageous for the most part to the apparatus alone. Understandably, to realize such a policy in a country with a large population, the apparatus had to provide itself with a powerfully proliferating bureaucratic force.

As a result of this, an authoritarian system of organizational relations took shape in the form of the opposition "we and they," where "we" comprised the administrative-command apparatus as the so-called "authentic bearer" of socialist ideals and interests, whereas "they" comprised the remaining mass of workers that this apparatus had to organize, mobilize, and sometimes even force to realize the social programs "we" put forward. Such a system of organizing social life not only ignored the accumulated human potential inherent in democratic norms and principles and forms of organization as a base from which to begin democratizing further the processes of social transformation in society, but on the contrary, fostered the establishment of authoritarian-voluntaristic, and in the period of Stalinism, downright tyrannical methods of organization in the life-activity of the people as a whole, opposed not only to the humanistic principles of socialist ideals, but even to the progressive tendencies and results already achieved by human society.

The more than half-century implantation of these methods of organizing life had as a result as well that man in his social behavior conducted himself as an objectified subject, that is to say as a subject extremely limited in his social possibilities and in the sovereignty of his freedom. As an object, an alienated screw loose from the social system, man could not take upon himself the responsibility for decisions taken by the social organs, for they were not his decisions. He minimized his efforts in realizing programs that were "external" to him, programs that might even have been socially necessary but did not seem personally significant to him, insofar as they had been worked out without an orientation towards him as towards a subject, or had been oriented towards him in an extremely limited way. As a result of this, he was oriented for the most part to external control from the social apparatus that programmed his life-activity, since common social aims and tasks reached him only in the abstract, whereas his real social activity was directed by them to a very limited degree. Subjectively he became standardized in his ideological dispositions with a directly expressed conformist orientation, intolerant towards various departures from leveling standards, without initiative. The outstanding characteristic of such an objectified subject was his performative disposition to the notion of his social existence, insofar as only its realization would guarantee a definite measure of reliability for his own existence in the authoritarian system. It followed that such a subject was extremely limited in his sovereign potentialities for active self-assertion, for he was socially significant only as a means for the reproduction of the social system, only as a certain abstract superfluity and extra value.

But such a limitation on the subjective potentialities of man is fraught with terrible consequences for the social system itself, consequences of a fundamental and principled significance. Yet it is quite clear that the forced-performative nature of the existence of the fundamental subject of social life, man-the-toiler, inevitably stifles his social interests, his active participation, while on the whole it undeviatingly lowers the effectiveness of the whole social process of production, baring the crisis nature of the very system of existing social organization.

And once again, as has happened in history more than once, the way out of the crisis lies in a priorities-reorientation of all the factors of social existence, including as well the system of its social organization, in the direction of man. And that is the social sense of the perestroika decisions, efforts, and collisions. Their essential directedness is not only to emancipate the practical and spiritual potentials of the main social force, man-the-toiler, but also to subordinate the whole system of social institutions and factors to the progressive development of man as the full-blooded subject of social life, as the main wealth of the *socium*. This sets out the social measure, the paradigm of goal-directedness and effectiveness that accompanies and qualitatively delineates the new changes. This also signifies that there is a virtual reorientation taking place in the practice of our social transformations, from those theoretical dispositions which absolutized the objectively necessary nature of the pre-determinedness of socialism in its state-collective forms, to attempts at forming scientific dispositions oriented to the specifically subjective nature of existence in the historical process as a whole and the building of socialism in particular; to the notion that any social system is merely an historically limited system of interacting social subjects which, by means of the social organism created by them, serve to secure more benign and purposeful common conditions for their existence.

The essential orientations of the perestroika processes, whether this is acknowledged by its participants or not, starts from the fact that all things are in society and are factors of an historically formed system of social subjects (man, social groups, society as a whole) the socially-reformative activity of which – the mode of existence, production, and development – as much of the social subjects themselves as of the system of real factors, including as well the objective factors of their existence. And a radical change of the form of life itself means a change of the whole complex consisting of the active mode of existence – its fundamental goal-orientations, mechanisms, and means of organization, the system of criteria for appraising the course and results of reforms connected with the reorientation to the working man in all spheres of social life-activity, economic, socio-political, and spiritual.

Such a social directive in the strategy of the forthcoming constructive changes first of all posits a reorientation in the system of defining determinants of man's life-activity, in his needs; for, as Marx truly noted, no one can do anything without doing it for the sake of one or other of his needs. In the complex network of factors that determine the socially and personally significant activity of man (of working collectives, of social institutions), needs and desires form precisely the fundamental nucleus of the process of determination, insofar as they first of all express and depict the contradictions between objectively necessary and real factors of the life-activity social subjects, which is to say, that needs are the subjective form of their manifestation, the subjective mode of identification and actualization of the contradictions of the subject's existence. Only by means of needs do the real contradictions of a personal and a social nature acquire their vitality and turn into the real prods of human activity.

The dialectic of the interconnection between the system of activity and the needs of society embraces the whole life-cycle of the reproduction and development of society at this or another stage of its development. This interconnection has the nature of a necessary, essential, stable, uninterrupted connection; that is, it has the status of a general sociological law. Its essence lies in the fact that the functioning and development of society requires the accordance and subordination of the joint activity made feasible by it to the satisfaction of its real, socially necessary needs, formed and reproduced by in the process of its existence and expressing its social nature. Hence the absolute goal of social life-activity is the satisfaction of the needs of society that form its social groups and individuals.

But this absolute goal has a concrete historical mode for its realization at various stages of the development of civilization, of a specific country of this or that people, which defines itself by the complex network of their socio-cultural development: by the nature of the economy, historical traditions, specifics of the social differentiation of social groups, the peculiarities of the mechanisms of culture, etc. Therefore, the absolute goal of social life-activity manifests itself as an historically specific goal, varying according to the position and role of the economically and politically significant social groups of the society.

The specific activity of the law of the correspondence of socially-reformative activity with the needs of society in antagonistic systems manifests itself in the fact that the defining role in the mediation of the mutual relationship between joint activity and the needs of society is played economically and politically by the ruling class. Therefore the system's satisfaction of the needs of society, of the people as a whole, is tied to the satisfaction of this mediator's needs, and because the basic goal in these of society was the production and acquisition of surplus, then it is only through the realization of this goal that the system of personal and social needs of all the members of society receives real satisfaction. And to the extent to which they coincide with the real needs of society the progressive development of the system of life-activity of society as a whole is stimulated.

The theoretical conception of socialism fundamentally starts from the necessity of overcoming the social-class, social-group mediation between the system of needs and society's activity, since it will be overcome thanks to the processes of collectivization and the class-antagonistic division itself of society. The social nature of production itself will immediately make direct and clear the connection between them, for in the words of Marx and Engels, communists aspire to such an organization of production and commerce that might make possible for them a normal satisfaction of all needs; that is limited only by the needs themselves. It was posited that the workers organized in their working associations would arrange through their organs of social self-administration according to a "rigorous plan" the correspondence between the needs of the members of society and their creative activity, its directedness, effectiveness, results, etc., since this would secure the collectivization of the basic means of productions and on this foundation the overcoming of such mediating mechanisms as a money economy and politics in the organization sphere. And the liquidation of the most immense areas of social expenditure on a bureaucracy and army as well as the overcoming of expenditures on elemental market regulation would lead to the rapid and quite effective satisfaction of the needs of the society of workers' associations.

The practice of social transformations exposed the obviously illusory nature of these calculations, not only because profound distortions of the conception's goals crept in as a result of attempts to realize them by inhumane means and methods. One of the main reasons for the dead-end nature of the social transformations that were undertaken was the break in principle between means and ends, the assumption that socialism can and should be built by any means, even if it entailed the sacrifice of definite groups in whose name socialism was to be realized.

Ideologically, such an approach depended on the conclusion, fatalistic in its nature, concerning the objective predetermination, the "messianic advent" of socialism that would accompany the collectivization of the basic means of production (although in practice this turned out to be merely a formal-administrative, forced collectivization, and not the result, as Marx anticipated, of the natural-historical qualitative change of the productive forces).

But the illusoriness of calculations to the effect that collectivization in and of itself would provide benevolent premises for a much more effective resolution of the contradiction between man's needs and his activity, sprang as well from the most vital moments of the conception itself. It even proposed a radical change, a demolition of society's mechanisms of production and consumption, trade-monetary regulation in the economy and the means and methods developed with it of the democratic organization of social life by means of which man's realization of his subjective functions as a participant and regulator of social relations was once strengthened and secured. With this, their potential as pan-human forms of the regulation of social relations was underestimated or simply ignored.

What was proposed instead of these mechanisms? The planned organization of the process of production and consumption by social organs, the separation by quantity and quality of expended labor, organized by those very same organs which essentially had to be the means that directly secured the effectiveness of the social labor of the producers associated in working nuclei. The latter together govern, dispose, and use the means of social production. With this, not only would the guarantee of social protection for each person be secured, but an all-sided development of the personality as well, free from social oppression. It followed that the mediator between the needs and the activity of man and of society was the overall-social system of organs.

In this connection, the assumption of the necessity for a proletarian state in the transition period was completely logical, with the organs of social self-administration coming later. Therefore the problem of the mechanisms for mediation of the relations of personality and society, production and consumption, the system of needs and the system of man's activity and that of society came to be seen as first of all an organizational problem of consciously planned regulation through the political system. The historical paradox of the primal assertion of socialism was that setting out to demolish the old mechanisms – trade-monetary relations, and especially to destroy the old state machine – it reproduced them. For if trade-monetary relations lost their nature of real economic regulator, they became a quasi-regulator in the form of an inventory-accounting instrument while the state regulator acquired the nature of a total all-embracing regulator. The political, party-state apparatus became a hundred times more proliferated, more powerful and more expensive than it had been in the past, since it concentrated the functions of overall-social regulator even where it had previously been limited, in the economy. For this reason the apparatus also became the defining subject of social reproduction bringing the subject functions of the basic mass of the population to the level of elementary executive order.

The cycle of social reproduction was now regulated as a monopoly by the party-state system, regulated by the administrative-command means characteristic of it, organically including violent means as well, least of all oriented to man as the subject of his own social life-activity. Having become functionally and factually the uncontrolled bearer of the needs of the most authoritarian social system, the apparatus placed the satisfaction of the needs of the working masses in an arbitrary dependence on the satisfaction of these overall-systemic needs, since with this was connected the possibility of the forced creation of the state-collective conditions of life for the new society; that is, the fate of socialism. Once again, a paradoxical situation manifested itself – the needs of the workers who were building the socialist society were subordinated to the dispositions and needs of the party-state system, its apparatus, which in reality saw as the subject of social changes, not the people as a whole but itself.

It was posited that even in these circumstances the working masses would be "interested in building socialism," moved by "revolutionary enthusiasm" and a socialist perspective. In actual fact, to the degree to which the satisfaction of their real needs was limited by means of the alienation of the results of the labor of the people as a whole in favor of the state and its apparatus to an extent unprecedented in recent history, to that degree the interest of the toiler in his labor fell, with corresponding results for the development of all the factors of social life. And none of the forms of forced regulation (even the repression of tens of millions of people) could overcome the profound flaw of this social mechanism of the life-activity of people, which had turned the human toiler into an object of cruel exploitation. (A single illustration will suffice: now the workers' share of the national income of the USSR is 37%; it was 64% in Tsarist Russia, and in contemporary countries of the west 70–75%.)

In this way, history has once again demonstrated the dead-end nature of an orientation that makes man an object in the social mechanisms of production, an orientation that prevents the development of society, as historically defined, into an integral system. The general historical tendency of the growth of a fulness of the subject-functions of man in these mechanisms secures maximum possibilities for his free and sovereign social existence and characterizes the dominant direction of the harmonization of inter-personal, inter-group and societal relations, of the harmonization of the system of factors for the social well-being of man.

Translated by Sidney Monas

Note

1. V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (*Works*), 5th edn, 55 vols (Moscow, 1958–65), 36:303.

8 A Philosophical Interpretation of the Historical Process: An Instance of Substantiation of the Marxist Approach

Yuri K. Pletnikov

1. THE PROBLEM OF BEGINNING THE THEORETICAL REPRODUCTION OF THE HISTORICAL PROCESS

Logical links between the categories of a philosophy of history constitute the structure of a theory of historical reality. This must be done, as Lenin said, not by "telling" nor by "persuading" but by "proving."[1] For the resolution of this type of task, let us refer to Marx's *Capital*, which in considerable measure goes beyond the bounds of political economy to speak to theory and methodology. Proponents of vulgar political economy reduce its system to a mere combination of ideas, but Marx observed that his economic analysis proceeded from concrete historical reality: from a "given social economic period."[2]

However, the construction of a theoretical system does not begin with the analysis of a concrete entity immediately perceived by the senses: this only results in ever "leaner abstractions" and ever simpler definitions. The theoretical system properly forms when the concrete is reflected in a comprehensive cognition as a synthesis of numerous definitions: a unity of the multifarious. Such a theoretical reproduction of reality is dominated by a further ascent of cognition, but now from the abstract to the concrete. Marx believed that this method was "evidently right in scientific terms."[3]

Simplest definitions correspond to the elementary formation of the subject under examination: its "cell." According to Lenin, *Capital* begins with the analysis of "the most simple, ordinary, fundamental, the most mass-like, commonplace attitude of bourgeois (commodity) society that can be encountered billions of times: commodity exchange."[4] But such seeming simplicity requires more thought than more complex and elaborate forms. What Marx showed was that commodity relations was the genesis of bourgeois social relations: its "cell," the elementary form of its wealth.[5] The idea "cell" should not, however, be identified literally with the initial category of a theoretical system. Since the use-value per se "is beyond the range of questions dealt with in political economy," as Marx wrote,[6] it is not the commodity per se but rather the value that becomes the initial category of a political-economic study of capitalism. If one may compare the "cell" with the atom, the problem of the initial category may then be compared with the discovery of the atom's nucleus.

The history of cognition shows that, after the identification of elementary forms, elaborations on their properties anticipate the emergence of integrated theoretical systems, as an ascent from the abstract to the concrete. As B. M. Kedrov has noted, such an ascent is the logical equivalent of the development principle in constructing a science.[7] *Capital* opened new pages in science. Lenin wrote: "Such a method should be applied to the respective study of dialectics in general (for the dialectics of bourgeois society in Marx is only an instance of dialectics)."[8] Thus, the "cell" of social life represents a fundamental process in all of mankind's history.

The "cell" should be, first, an elementary formation of social life; secondly, it should be a mass phenomenon directly observable; and thirdly, it should contain all social contradictions in rudimentary form. At the same time, this "cell" should possess specific characteristics of its own, and embody the distinction between human society and nature rather than merely what distinguishes one stage of the historical process from another.

It would seem at first sight that "man" is an elementary formation of social life. But the idea of a "solitude" like that of Robinson Crusoe prevents this, for man is always a social entity. In fact, he constitutes "the definite character of the society in which he lives,"[9] and, therefore, to begin a study of social life with a study of man is equal to beginning it with a study of society, that is, to identifying an elementary formation of the system with the system per se. Similarly, no socio-economic formation (a way of life, or material production) can be regarded as a "cell" because it is not elementary.

The "cell" must be not merely a general abstract expression of social phenomena but, also, must contain the concrete characteristics of a unit of the social system that is objectively indivisible.[10] Neither social relations, nor man's actions can constitute such a unit. Being a simplest formation of the vivid, direct activity of people, an action needs must presuppose a subject, an object, necessities, interests, aims, means, and the like. In my opinion, an objectively indivisible unit of the social system may appear only in one case: when activity passes from the form of motion into the form of material objects, that is, when people's activity materializes.

There is no need to prove the scientific significance of Marx's discovery that the commodity is a "cell" of bourgeois society. But while concentrating their attention on the historically transient commodity form that results from people's activity, researchers have not yet assessed what has concrete, general significance for all stages of mankind's history: the materialized activity per se which is not necessarily a commodity. In a sense, this is the only "cell" of social life. Being objectively indivisible, it is indivisible from the material-object substate of this system. Acting individuals and their material conditions – all that Marx and Engels called actual prerequisites of man's history – are mediated in particular objective forms.[11]

The objects created by people appear in their lives as substance and potential energy in the form of tools that affect natural and social processes. They also are carriers of the sign systems and images perceived by the senses. These created objects are inseparable from all social links that, together with them, form the production and reproduction of social individuals "as a most integral and universal product of society."[12]

This object world is multifarious but, at the same time, integral, because all of its components are the result of man's activity. These objects become "cells" of social life because the human activity embodied in them constitutes their social essence. Such activity constantly reproduces a contradiction between useful labor actually expended and the socially necessary labor which corresponds to a definite, historical, socio-economic period. This contradiction represents a peculiar, sporadic form of the motion of the whole system of social contradictions, primarily that between the social production level attained and of man's requirements, which grow constantly and have no limit.

A "cell" is intrinsically linked with labor.[13] But such generic activity does not signify the "cell" per se, but only that which establishes it in this quality under the general philosophic category of activity as a property of all matter. This allows such activity to acquire the status of an initial category, a starting point of the theoretical reproduction of the historical process. In theoretical cognition, the beginning comes forth as that which substantiates and proves itself in the system under consideration.[14]

A theory of the historical process and the historical process itself have a common point of reference. The logical is at the same time the historical, but the historical which is freed from historical form and accidental hindrances. The course of abstract thought ascending from the simplest to the complex "corresponds to the actual historical process."[15] But such an historical process through cognition does not preclude the reverse course, that from the concrete to the abstract. Such thought approaches, as it were, a range of circles, a spiral where a repetition is encountered on a new, higher basis.[16]

Critics of this concept assert that the materialized result of labor cannot be a "cell" of social life, since any abstraction from the commodity form of the product results in departing from the social characteristics of labor and its product in general. But Marx never identified the social nature of the product of labor with the cost characteristics of commodity production. The commodity form was viewed by him as an historical form of expressing the social properties of the product of labor. According to Marx, the essence of these properties resided in the social character of labor, "since the latter exists as social manpower expended."[17]

Regardless of the historical social form, labor always creates use-value. By separating the products of labor from themselves, men become social individuals and unite into one whole. But, in the final analysis, it is not the result of labor in kind (though foregrounded in pre-capitalist societies) that becomes an objective equivalent and, consequently, the genesis of production relations, but, rather, the socially-necessary labor embodied in such results. Becoming, in this respect, a carrier of the social substance, the product of labor cannot but possess social properties. This is true regardless of historical form. Therefore, people have always been interested in the expenditures of labor (time), though not equally at various stages of development.

Critics of this concept also doubt whether socially-necessary labor embodied in products of labor is universal. The argument consists in this, that in the historical perspective, socially-necessary labor loses its social significance as a result of the development of universal labor.

Marx regarded as universal labor any scientific labor, any discovery or invention,[18] and, if one goes to the ultimate, any really creative product of spiritual production. The uniqueness of universal labor signifies that, in principle, it is impossible to measure the results obtained with working time. Is it possible to say, for instance, what expenditures of socially-necessary labor are required to create a theory of relativity or of quantum mechanics? But does that mean that the future progress of science and technology will free mankind from all efforts in satisfying man's material necessities? Not at all.

However sophisticated the "people-free" technology might be, it will always require the direct labor of technologists, programmers, set-up men, operators, and others. Their labor will be measured, as usual, with working time and bear an imprint of socially-necessary labor. Universal labor is only "an absolute borderline for the reduction of the working day."[19] Labor and the products of labor will forever retain their social properties.

This discussion shows, as Marx said, that "history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his own ends."[20] Or, to put it another way, human activity is the only possible way that the historical reality can exist and develop. However, this truth does not yet disclose all the complex and contradictory aspects of the historical process.

2. HISTORICAL REALITY AS A SUBJECT-OBJECT REALITY

When compared with the natural reality, the historical is a subject-object reality. People are both the authors and the characters of the historical drama, both subjects and objects of historical events. According to Marx, a misconception regarding this fact was the principal fault of all previous materialism, which regarded reality only as object.[21]

But consciousness and will are the inevitable characteristics of a subject. At the same time the subject is not consciousness or will per se, but a material entity capable of having a creative attitude towards reality. Marx rejected the inference of a "non-corporeal" subject, transformed in Hegel's philosophy into an absolute personality. "It is impossible," insisted Marx, "to separate thought from matter that thinks. Matter is the subject of all changes."[22] Such "thinking matter" resolves into social individuals and various social groups and strata. In certain aspects, society as a whole is also a subject of social life. But since there is no unique subject and there can be none, then there is no unique object, either. Apart from the surrounding world as a general object, one may speak of individual objects. The individual object depends on the particular case: on its form and on the relationship by which it is treated as a subject.

The line between the subject and the object is arbitrary and relative. While remaining a subject, society, for example, may act as the object of its own transforming activity. Therefore, the difference between the subject and the object may be established only in concrete relations. However, the problem is not reduced to that only. The interacting subject and object of the historical reality – even presented in one and the same system and thus differentiated on some grounds – penetrate and supplement each other. To be more precise, the matter is not merely in the interaction between the subject and the object, but in the interaction of their definite properties defined as the subjective and the objective.

The practical activity of people considered in the aspect of natural phenomena is a form of the objective process. Its materialized result is also objective. At the same time, such an activity is subjective because their urges appear as goal-setting activities. The historical reality, of necessity, presupposes the subjective aspect along with the objective one. The subjective, in the true sense of the word, characterizes the ability of subjects to assess situations, make decisions, and attain set goals: the properties of consciousness and organization.

The subject's own property of being able to effect social change is different form natural phenomena. In this case, it is not merely practical activity. Rather, practical activity as a cause of developments is a subjective factor, as designated in Marxist theory. It is opposed to the objective factor, whose principal content is made up of past materialized activity. The subjective comes forth in this connection as the practical (material) force of subjects. The significance of such force grows with the growing intricacy of tasks that are solved not only by classes and parties, but by particular politicians as well.

Marxism has never questioned the part played in history by a personality leading a mass movement, a political party, or a state. The realities that threaten mankind with nuclear or ecological disasters call for much higher responsibility on the part of political leaders of all countries, and primarily those of the superpowers. New political thinking is becoming more and more the criterion of state wisdom, prudence, and perspicacity. But this does not mean that Marxist philosophy of history reduces its analysis merely to the parts played by outstanding figures.

Still, man must be incorporated into the fabric of historical-philosophical research. The problems of Marxist historical materialism are, at the same time, the problems of man's development. People make their history. But this characteristic of the historical process is not at all an alternative to determinism. First of all, man cannot be regarded as a "social atom." By pursuing his own aims, man, in one way or another, implements the general goals of the community from which he is inseparable. Even where the historical process looks chanceful – a collision of the plurality of desires and actions – the fortuitousness, nevertheless, is an historically-motivated necessity. Secondly, each generation inherits the results of the activity of their predecessors and continues or, otherwise, overcomes their innate tendencies. Therefore, however high might man subjectively stand over the conditions of his life, objectively he is subordinate to them. As a result, the activity of people (of classes or communities, to be more precise) necessarily acquires the features of the natural historical process.

The natural historical process does not depend on people's awareness of it. At the same time, it becomes a reality only through their activity. However, this ontological approach should not be identified with the epistemological approach. Cognizing objective laws of society, people use them in their practical activity. It is only in this epistemological sense that one may speak of a certain separation of social laws from the practical activity of people. The natural historical process and human activity are relatively independent characteristics of the historical reality. But they are not treated as two aspects of the historical reality, for history in all respects is human activity. These are two levels of historical reality: human activity as of the first order, while the natural historical process constitutes a higher order still.

But the natural historical process does not preclude alterative routes of development. Laws of social development are effective in the activity of large groups of people, of society as a whole. They are mass laws, laws as tendencies, whose necessity, when realized through the collision of a plurality of desires and actions, presupposes a variety of alternative ways of coping with outstanding social tasks. Therefore, there are a multiformity of historical choices by way of translating one of the existing opportunities into reality (depending on the concrete objective and the subjective conditions). It should be borne in mind that people's activity may correspond to the laws of social development or may not. It may accelerate the historical process or, otherwise, tend to stunt it. Hence the variants of historical development: uneven development of various countries and regions, a possibility to enter a blind alley, or even to regress. Experience now shows that any totalitarian regime, regardless of the social form it takes, is a blind alley in social development. Democratization of all aspects of social life, the social protection of human rights, higher standards of life are becoming now a sine qua non for the progress of the historical process.

The subject-object nature of historical reality manifests itself in the motive forces of its development as well. There were times in the history of philosophy when the notion of the motive forces of social development tended to converge with the notion of cause, the ultimate cause of developments, and was even identified with it. The founders of Marxism approached the motive forces of social development in this way, inquiring into the actual causes that shaped up in people's mind as ideal motives.[23] But the causal treatment of motive forces poses another task, that of finding out the mechanism of social subordination.

It is evident that human activity is an indispensable component of any social cause. Even object-object relations in the historical reality, like the relations between the means of production and the product, are mediated by people's activity, be it labor in material production or in other domains of social life, like class struggle or competition. Historical materialism finds the ultimate cause, the crucial motive, in economic development. At the same time, historical materialism is not identical to "economic materialism." It does not preclude other motive forces of social, political, and spiritual origin. In this context, a question arises of the ratio between motive forces and the source of social development.

Dialectical contradictions are the universal source of development, and may also be the motive force. However, the proportion between the two is far too complex to be treated in general terms. If they generally coincide in nature, the difference is quite essential in social life. The source of social development is unique, while motive forces are multifarious. Social contradictions constitute not just the nucleus of the motive forces of social development, but in everything that induces and accelerates social development.

But in what manner and measure do social contradictions perform their motive function? Hegel dealt with contradiction, a fact that has deep implications. It was directed against the prejudices of former systems of logic and of ordinary consciousness that removed contradiction "from things, from the essence and the true in general."[24] Contrary to metaphysical arguments, Hegel predicated that contradiction "is the root of any motion and viability," "the principle of any self-motion." Considering the "rational kernel" of Hegel's dialectics, Lenin concluded: "Dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradictions in the very essence of objects . . . "[25]

The deeper the contradiction and the stronger its relationship with the object, the more stable is its motive force. It is not the contradiction in general but the contradiction as a motive force that makes the essence of dialectical materialism. In the same manner, social development does not depend on the particular quantity of the existing contradictions but on their correspondence to objective laws of self-motion.

Some scholars believe that only contradictions that are resolvable can be motive forces of development. This can hardly be accepted. Any contradiction immanent in an object signifies the interaction of its polarities and, thus, the source of the self-motion of the object at any stage of its development. But a resolution signifies a break in continuity, a qualitative transformation of the object: its new stage, or its disappearance or replacement.

Besides, the origins of motion of a dialectical contradiction reside in the contradiction itself. That is quite natural, for the equilibrium of the sides of a contradiction is arbitrary and relative: one side always determines the other and acts as the leading force. This means that the sides of a dialectical contradiction change with different "rhythms": different relations of acceleration, lagging, discrepancy, polarity, antagonism. As a result, the motion of the contradiction, one way or another, will upset the measure, that is, will change the boundaries of the particular unity of the opposite sides and, further, will effect the qualitative certainty of the object. As Marx says, "One of the extremes gets the upper hand of the other."[26]

Such is the natural motion of a dialectical contradiction. However, this motion is much more complex in the historical process, where each side is represented by people, social groups, and strata. At a certain time, conservative tendencies may predominate, thus retarding the development. This is equally true of capitalism and socialism. Then the natural motion of contradictions is essentially restricted. The contradictions accumulate and become further exacerbated as crisis is reached. The measure of the activity of social subjects is determined, in the final analysis, by their interests, whether real or illusory. The words of Helvetius apply today: "interest is an omnipotent magician changing in the eyes of all beings any object."[27] Human interests, inseparable from human requirements, have always played the part of directly acting causes.

3. DETERMINATION OF HUMAN ACTIVITY: THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL SUBSTANCE

As a phenomenon of the material world, requirements emerge at the level of biological (animal) development. To satisfy such requirements means to bring the state of the organism to correspondence with the requirements of its life-activity. Social life in a sublated form – i.e., transformed and subordinate – also exhibits biological requirements, creating at the same time a new type of social requirements. The latter are motivated by society: the state of productive forces and production relations, social status of classes and other social groups, cultural life of people, and the like. If biological requirements are a direct manifestation of the contradiction between the organism and the medium in which it exists, social requirements manifest such contradictions indirectly via the production and consumption of the means of existence. Material production requirements or, otherwise, economic requirements, are topped with all the other social requirements – political, ethic, artistic – which predetermine the diversity of people's activity.

Requirements correlate with interests, which, in fact, cannot exist without requirements and are their product. But the requirement creates interest only when it meets with difficulties, or when its satisfaction calls for special social actions. Interest is that which sets social forces into motion. Like social relations, interest does not exist without man. At the same time, interest is brought about not by man's consciousness but by his objective position in society. That is why individuals and even classes may act counter to their interests. Interest is that wherein objective life is related to the subject. Man's conception of this moment creates in his mind those desires, motives, and stimuli which finally set practical goals.

Realization of common interests plays a principal role in determining human activity. Common interests include individual, personal interests, but also the interests of the community (class, nation) and the amalgamation (state, party, union). Common interests are inseparable from those of the community or amalgamation, and, in fact, transform people's activity into the activity of the larger group, thus subordinating the individual directly to the social entity. This explains the social positions of the individual and the group subjects in the process of cognition, its orientation, and the forms of this process.

Social interest as a special type of common interest contains the need for social development, including the development of individual man. The private-property basis of motion inevitably creates the prerequisites of the opposition of class interests and social interests. Such a condition is overcome by the objective position of the working class which, in principle, is not tied to the institution of private ownership of the means of production. At the same time, it would be erroneous to ignore the possibility of such opposition at all insofar as applied to the working class. Of course, the fundamental interests of the working class are inseparable from the need for social development. Today they fully coincide with the general human interest in preserving and developing human civilization. Apart from these fundamental interests, the working class also has temporary and specific interests – professional, economic, national. Therefore, it is important to understand the priority of common interests. In this respect Lenin's words are topical today as never before: "From the point of the principal ideas of Marxism, the interests of social development are supreme over the interests of the proletariat – the interests of the working movement as a whole are higher than the interests of a separate strata of workers or separate moments of the movement."[28] The priority of general human interests is a "must" of the new political thinking gaining approval around the world.

People's realization of their interests is a prerequisite of setting goals which, accomplished, are not external to the historical reality. Progress as motion and orientation, with respect to an ideal future, is a requisite moment of social practice. But ideas bring about only ideas, which must be implemented to transform the reality that makes goals – and, thus, the dependence of the present on the future – the really acting causes.

Correspondence between the means of human activity and its goals expresses the inner relationship between freedom of choice and its dependence on means. That is why the subordination of means to goals is conditioned not by the ideal nature of the goals but, rather, by the objective conditions of social development, by the requirements and interests expressed in goals. It only seems to man, Lenin noted, that "his aims are taken from without the world, that they are independent of the world ('freedom')." In point of fact, "man's aims are brought about by the objective world and presuppose it – find it as a given entity."[29]

Setting goals for activity is one of the mediated links of social phenomena. A scientific analysis of the historical process requires an account of the causality of the formation of goals and the conditions of implementation. But determinism is not an alternative to the freedom for man to act. On the contrary, determinism only prepares the ground for real creativity in cognition and the transformation of reality.

The natural historical process is inseparable from goal-setting activity. However, this inference does not answer the question of the manner in which goals are subordinated to objective conditions, that which does not depend on man's consciousness and will. To put it another way, in order to substantiate the materialistic understanding of history, one has to find out the nature of social material form.

Marx solves this task by defining labor as man's creative, controlling interaction with nature, with the sphere of material production. In this, Marx's position differs from that of classical bourgeois political economy. In particular, Marx proved the dual nature of the labor contained in a commodity, differentiating between concrete and abstract labor. This outstanding discovery, important for both political economy and the philosophy of history, revealed both the specific features and the essence of the social substance which constitutes the inner basis of all social phenomena. Though the social substance is inseparable from the materialized substrate of society, it is not constituted by the natural objects transformed by man but, rather, by the socially-necessary labor which inevitably is present in objects altered by man. The point is, as Marx noted, that "a commodity [i.e., the product of labor] exists in a purely social form which has nothing in common with its physical reality."[30] People consciously transform the objects of nature and create vital necessities. The social substance, as understood by Marx, does not depend on people's consciousness and will in all its relationships. It is historically conditioned by the productivity of social labor which, in turn, characterizes the level of development of the productive forces in society.

In *Capital*, Marx treated the social substance as a value substance. But does that mean that value is the only form in which the social substance manifests itself? I think not. Value is an historically transient phenomenon: it is inseparable from commodity production. Social substance, on the other hand, represents the social process as a whole. Marx remarked: "The commodity 'value' is merely a certain historical form of something existing in all social forms."[31] This "something" is actually the social substance as distinguished from the materialized substrate of society. If concrete and absolute labor is to be regarded as a specific entity related only to commodity production, it would be quite logical to treat useful and socially necessary labor as the general entity.

The social substance is the sole objective equivalent of the economy of social labor in its exchange with human activity. Together with this exchange, it takes part in the production of material necessities, in the genesis of material (production) relations in society. It is thanks to the nature of this social substance that the primary social links, precisely the material social relations, can form without passing through people's consciousness and will. Like the social substance, these links are conditioned by the rate of the development of the productive forces. This poses new problems for our understanding of social being, which is one of the fundamental categories of the materialistic understanding of history. Social being, as a material source that forms and develops public conscience but is independent of it, is that material formation which has the production and reproduction of the social substance as its exclusive function.[32]

Having established that social relations are reduced to production relations and that production, or economic, relations are dependent on the productive forces, Marx thus set a solid basis for understanding social development as a natural historical process. But I would like to note that not all relations in society have the status of social relations. In the first place, social relations have definite subjects, without which they are only abstractions. Secondly, all their multitude is reduced to material, production relations. Thirdly, social relations constitute a social form of labor or, to use a generic notion, human activity. That is, practical activity fuses with social relations and always constitutes a concrete historical process.

Social relations, therefore, cannot be alienated from human activity, nor can they be equated, either. The principle of their unity – rather than their opposition or unconditional identification – is the methodological basis for the cognition of historical reality. Only in this way can one understand the historical sense of people's material activity, and thus reveal the import of production method as the basis of formational stages in the historical process.

4. FORMATION STAGES OF THE HISTORICAL PROCESS

As Marxist thought about socio-economic formations developed, new possibilities opened up for understanding the criteria by which we may single out major stages in the historical process.[33]

Marx was the first – in the context of the philosophy of history – to use the notion of formation in its categorical sense in his book *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.* Analyzing political processes in the formation and development of bourgeois society, Marx pointed out that its ideas were represented in the language of slave-owners and feudalism, at least until bourgeois relations became established. As soon as the "new social formation set up, antediluvian giants disappeared and all the ancient Romans risen from the dead went with them."[34] In his "On the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law," Marx posited the criteria for historical phases as the correlation between civil society and the state. He distinguished ancient times, the middle ages, the new time, and the democracy of the future. In his "Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts 1844," he presented history as the cyclical process of labor alienation in pre-class, class, and classless societies.

In "German Ideology," Marx and Engels divided the historical process on the basis of property forms which express various stages in the development of the division of labor. In his "Hired Labor and Capital," Marx wrote: "Ancient society, feudal society, bourgeois society represent such combinations of production relations in which each combination signifies a special stage in the historical development of mankind."[35] Finally, in the introduction to *Capital,* Marx singled out one more criterion for dividing the historical process: the method of material production as a progression: Asian, ancient, feudal, and the bourgeois method contemporary with him. The communist method of production may righteously be placed among them. The question of the communist formation, its first (lower) phase called socialism by Marxists of this century, is discussed by Marx in his "Critique of the Gotta Programme." Marx believed that social epochs could also be distinguished by the special character and method of relating the worker (labor) and the means of production.[36]

The criteria cited are all of the same order, for they all allow the singling out of concrete historical types of social systems. The method of material production is the most general and fundamental criterion. When studying the criteria of formational development, Lenin placed special emphasis on production relations and types (forms) of property, i.e., that side of social production which expresses the social relationship between people. In terms of methodology, this criterion has an advantage which allows, within certain limits, the identification of the formation which does not yet possess all necessary typological features. The point is that the new historical type begins to form on the material-technical basis of the previous stage of development. Such a situation obtains in the course of the formation of capitalism and socialism. Production relations and the ownership of production means acquire relative independence as the dialectical sides of the formation stages of the historical process. Marx singled out slave-owning (ancient), feudal, bourgeois, and communist societies. He also paid attention to the Asian method of production. After the publication of works by G. Maurer, H. Bancroft, Hubert Howe, and L. Morgan, he named an archaic formation of the communal type as the starting point in the development of human society.

Marx analyzed worker relations to the means of production as a way of opposing common and private property. Marx subdivided the pre-communist stage of the historical process into "primary" and "secondary" formations. "Being the ultimate phase of the primary social formation," Marx noted, "the agricultural community is at the same time a phase of transition to the secondary formation, i.e., a transition from society based on common property to society based on private property."[37] As to the combining of social individuals into a whole, Marx distinguished between dependent people and free individuals, singling out pre-capitalist society (relations of personal dependence), capitalist society (relations of object dependence), and communist society (free individuality).[38] The most generalized division of the historical process is its differentiation into pre-history and true history which commences, according to Marx, with the direct formation of communist society.

In identifying the criteria for historical divisions, Marx's usage of the term "formation" is far from being unambiguous. Such a semantic discrepancy is present in one and the same passage of his introduction to *Capital*:

> In general, Asian, ancient, feudal, and contemporary bourgeois methods of production may be marked as progressive epochs of the economic social formation. Bourgeois production relations are the last antagonistic form of the social production process, antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but in the sense of antagonism rooted in social conditions of the life of individuals; but the productive forces that develop in bourgeois society create at the same time material conditions for settling this antagonism. Therefore, the bourgeois social formation crowns the pre-history of human society.[39]

Here Marx uses the term "formation" twice. In the first case, the term is used in the sense of the secondary formation, including such an historical form as the agricultural (Asian) community. In the second, it refers to a stage of social development connected with the historically concrete method of production. Marx believed it was inconvenient to designate two or more notions with one term but, at the same time, he noted that it could hardly be avoided in all cases in any science.[40] The point is not to identify differing notions or substitute one for another. The second meaning of the term is basic for the category of socio-economic formation, which expresses those stages of the historical process which are characterized by their special method of production, their historical type of production relations, and their organization of life as a whole. It singles out that which transforms its stages into different systems.

Of major importance for the interpretation of the category of socio-economic formation is (1) the proof that social relations may be reduced to production relations and (2) the treatment of society as developing in isolation from nature. Since the socio-economic formation is an integral characteristic of a definite historical stage, there is no use asking which social stratifications should be included. Certainly, the method of the production of material life must be. Each socio-economic formation has its own method of production, which constitutes the material basis of its development as a whole.

A point of view that once had wide currency in Marxist writings doubted the necessity of the concept "society." In fact, having introduced the category of socio-economic formation, Marx disavowed empty arguments about "society in general." However, this does not mean that he rejected the notion of "society whatever its form may be."[41] The task was solved in a different way. To start with "society in general" before the true basis of social life had been discovered and studied meant to start from the end, rather than the beginning. Therefore, a study of the definite forms of the societal structure was made, instead of reasoning about "society in general." This study yielded good results. It allowed Marx to single out both general and specific features of human society or, to put it another way, society whatever its form might be. Any opposition of the notions "human society" and "socio-economic formation" is groundless for the mere reason that the first notion is generic with respect to the other. The first category reflects the qualitative certainty of social life as compared with nature, and the second the qualitative certainty of various historical stages.

Human society as an international community has never been a single system but a plurality of various independent, unevenly developing social units more-or-less isolated from each other but coexisting and interacting. Therefore, the categories "socio-economic formation" and "separate society" are inadequate for the proper comprehension of the historical process. So they are complemented with the category of "historical epoch." Each epoch displays the complex intermingling of separate societies of various historical types, each differing in type and development. World history appears here as a sequential transition from one historical epoch to another based on a common law of emergence, development, and change in socio-economic formations.

Apart from signifying an historical stage, the category of socio-economic formation also signifies the historical type. In this respect, the development of particular countries and regions is more informative than their formational development, especially at the early stage of human history when man's production activity depended on the environment in a larger measure. It makes formational development more concrete, and supplements it with the dialectic between socio-economic structures and their realization in everyday life. At the same time, the socio-economic formation cannot be reduced only to the abstract general, or presented as an arbitrary construct of the human mind. The socio-economic formation is also the concrete general, a real stage in the historical process, which manifested itself in the course of history in certain countries and regions in most adequate classical forms. It should be emphasized that it is not separate societies but human society as a whole that passes in its development through all formational stages.

Important features of the historical process are reflected by the category "civilization" as well, a term that correlates with its etymology ("civilis"). In the history of social thought, civilization is opposed to savagery and barbarism and regarded as a civil state related with the emergence of statehood, the division of labor into mental and manual, the appearance of writing, and the dissemination of agriculture and handicraft. The origins of civilization are inseparable from the development of material production – rising productivity, the appearance of the surplus product, trade, private property, exploitation of man – the split of society into classes, and the class struggle.

Civilization is a certain stage of the historical process. At the same time, it is a characteristic of the integrity of concrete historical reality. Taken in this meaning, the category of civilization correlates with the category of culture. Culture is often referred to in Soviet philosophic writings as the measure of man's development. Civilization is related with such a measure, though there is an essential difference between civilization and culture.

Are "cultured man" and "civilized man" equal in meaning? Evidently not. One does not result from the other. Culture characterizes the inner state of man, the development of his natural gifts and faculties, while civilization characterizes his external state, the society he lives in. As distinguished from culture, civilization is a measure of the development of the social medium. It also closes on the definition of man, though not man proper but on man as a human factor in the process of civilization. In the present historical epoch, civilization is developing to become a single, though contradictory, human civilization involving all progressive social forms.

Engels called slavery, serfdom, and hired labor the three great forms of enslaving man typical of the three great epochs of civilization.[42] Lenin proceeded from a similar periodic classification of class societies, noting the general regularity, righteousness, and succession of social development.[43] But this does not mean that all questions connected with the transition and development of class society have been exhausted. For many years now, a dispute goes on in Soviet social science about the formational nature of the Asian method of production. Another problem is also being disputed: the possibility of defining slavery and feudalism as two models of the single, estate-class formation.[44] I will dwell only on the essence of these problems.

In discussions started in the USSR in the 1920s, the Asian method of production was regarded as early slavery, and then, when the slave-owning formation had passed, as early feudal society. The accumulation of new historical materials brought difficulties to this view, but, on the other hand, confirmed Marx's conclusion that in the Asian agricultural community the collective principle predominated over the private-property one, proving that social inequality and exploitation already existed at the level of intercommunal relations. Communal property combines here with the exploitation of communities through a certain "single principle" of supreme communal power – that power of the ruler, priests, etc. – the power which exists "on the final count in one person."[45] This despotic "principle" assumes the supreme right to land and the surplus product, to the means of production, and the manpower of the communities. It was also established that these features of early-class development were the product of the historical stage rather than the region. Discussions in the mid-1960s went beyond the Asian region to take in Mycenaean society, the barbarian German states, America before Columbus, and pre-colonial Africa.

Emphasizing the universal character of the Asian method of production, some authors conclude that it is possible to single out a special socio-economic formation corresponding to this method. Various terms for this formation were proposed: Asian, tributary, bondage, early-class, etc. However, this point of view still remains an hypothesis. The social structure preceding slavery and feudalism – which had much in common and were, at the same time, different – may also be interpreted as an historical epoch of transition from the primary formation to the secondary. Such a social state lasted for thousands of years, to last in some regions even to our time, though in distorted form. Other interpretations cannot be excluded, either. One cannot ignore an hypothesis which treats the Asian method of production on a par with other models of pre-capitalist class society (along with slavery and feudalism). Substantiation of the single formational nature of slavery and feudalism is central to this interpretation.

Slavery, feudalism, and especially early-class societies are models of the single socio-economic formation on the following grounds: the determining role of natural implements of labor, manual labor, monopoly of the land by dominant classes, combined full or partial ownership of direct producers, non-economic coercion of labor, the rent form of exploitation-alienation of the surplus product. These are pros, but there are cons as well. One cannot but see the difference between the socio-economic status of a slave and a serf. As compared with slavery, feudal social relations created much more stimuli to labor on the part of direct producers. Therefore, given the same technical basis of production, the productive forces of society undergo qualitative changes. The economic principle of slave labor – employment of primitive implements of labor which cannot be easily spoiled – is discarded. Possibly for this reason the water-wheel known in Europe since the Roman Empire found wide currency only in the Middle Ages. The arguments for and against constituting a single, estate-class, rental, pre-capitalist socio-economic formation counterpoise each other. The problem remains open.

The introduction of a special early-class formation as one of the main stages of the historical process – or the combination of all post-primeval pre-capitalist societies into a single formation – does not contradict the Marxist view of the historical process as a regular advance from less-developed social forms to more-developed ones. The essence of the problem is summed by E. M. Zhukov: "as any new discovery in natural science speaks of the inexhaustible properties of matter rather than the disappearance of matter, any new data in historical science, however sensational they may seem, expand the framework of the materialistic understanding of history and allow the characterization of the historical process more accurately."[46]

Notes

1. V. I. Lenin, "Filosofskie tetradi" ["Philosophical Notebooks"], *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [*Works*], 5th edn, 55 vols (Moscow, 1958–65), 29:86.
2. Karl Marx, "Zamechanie na knigu A. Vagnera *Uchebnik politicheskoi ekonomii*" ["Remarks on A. Wagner's *Manual of Political Economy*"] in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [*Works*], 2nd edn, 50 vols (Moscow, 1955–81), 19:386.
3. K. Marx, "Ekonomitcheskie rukopisyi 1857–1859 godov (pervonatch-al'niy variant *Kapitala*)" ["Economic Manuscripts 1857–1859 (Initial Variant of *Capital*)"], *Works*, 46 (Pt. 1):37.
4. V. I. Lenin, "Philosophical Notebooks," *Works*, 29:318.
5. See K. Marx, *Kapital* (*Capital*), *Works*, 23:6, 43.
6. K. Marx, *K kritike politicheskoi ekonomii* (*Towards a Critique of Political Economy*), *Works*, 13:14.
7. See B. M. Kedrov, "O metode izlozhenia dialektiki ot abstractnogo k konkretnomu" ["On the Method of Expounding Dialectics from the Abstract to the Concrete"], *Voprosy filosofii* 2 (1978):29.
8. V. I. Lenin, "Philosophical Notebooks," *Works*, 29:318.
9. K. Marx, "Remarks on A. Wagner," *Works*, 19:377.
10. See E. V. Il'enkov, *Dialektika abstraktnogo i konkretnogo v "Kapitale" Marksa* [*Dialectics of the Abstract and the Concrete in Marx's "Capital"*] (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1960), 212–13.
11. K. Marx, F. Engels, "Nemetskaia ideologiia" ["German Ideology"], *Works*, 3:18–19.
12. K. Marx, "Ekonomicheskie rukopisi 1857–1859 godov (pervonach-al'nyi variant *Kapitala*)," ("Economic Manuscripts 1857–1859 [Original Variant of *Capital*]"), *Works*, 46 (Pt. 1):386.
13. K. Marx, "Economic Manuscripts 1857–1859," *Works*, 46 (Pt. 1):113.
14. See Zhabaikhan Abdildin, *Problema nachala v teoretitcheskom poznanii* [*The Problem of the Beginning in Theoretical Cognition*] (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1967), 286.
15. K. Marx, "Economic Manuscripts 1857–1859," *Works*, 46:39.
16. This concept is realized in a 3-volume collective work *Marksistsko-leninskaia teoriia istoricheskogo protsessa* [*Marxist-Leninist Theory of the Historical Process*] (Moscow: Nauka, 1981–1987). Vol. 1 (1981) is subtitled "Reality, Material Basis, Primary and Secondary"; vol. 2 (1983): "Integrity, Unity, and Multiformity"; vol. 3 (1987): "Dialectics of the Modern Epoch."
17. K. Marx, "Remarks on A. Wagner," *Works*, 19:391.
18. See K. Marx, *Capital*, *Works*, 25:116.
19. K. Marx, *Capital*, *Works*, 23:539.
20. K. Marx, F. Engels, "Sviatoe semeistvo, ili kritika krititcheskoi kritiki" ("Holy Family or Critique of the Critical Criticism"), *Works*, 2:102.
21. See K. Marx, *Thesis on Feuerbach*, *Works*, 3:1.

22. K. Marx, F. Engels, "Holy Family," *Works*, 2:143.
23. See F. Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach i konets klassicheskoi nemetskoi filosofii" ["Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy"], *Works*, 21:307.
24. G. W. F. Hegel, *Nauka logiki* [*Art of Logic*] (Moscow: Mysl, 1971), 2:65.
25. V. I. Lenin, "Philosophical Notebooks," *Works*, 29:227.
26. K. Marx, "K kritike gegelevskoi filosofii prava" ["On the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law"], *Works*, 1:322.
27. K. A. Helvetius, *Ob ume* [*About Mind*] (Moscow, 1938), 34.
28. V. I. Lenin, "Proekt programmy nashei partii" ["A Draft of the Programme of Our Party"], *Works*, 4:220.
29. V. I. Lenin, "Philosophical Notebooks," *Works*, 29:171.
30. K. Marx, "Teorii pribavochnoi stoimosti" ["Theories of Surplus Value"], *Works*, 26:154.
31. K. Marx, "Remarks on A. Wagner," *Works*, 19:391.
32. See *Materialisticheskaia dialektika kak obshchaia teoriia razvitiia: Dialektika obschestvennogo razvitiia* [*Materialist Dialectic as a General Theory of Development: Dialectic of Social Development*] (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), 35–36.
33. This topic was worked out in collaboration with E. N. Lysmankin. See *Integrity, Unity, and Multiformity*, 5–15. (Note 16 above.)
34. See K. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, *Works*, 8:120.
35. K. Marx, "Hired Labor and Capital," *Works*, 6:422.
36. See *Capital*, *Works*, 23:229; 24:43–44.
37. K. Marx, "Nabroski otveta na pis'mo V. I. Zasulich" ["Sketches of the Reply to the Letter of V. I. Zasulitch"], *Works*, 19:419.
38. K. Marx, "Economic Manuscripts 1857–1859," *Works*, 46:100–1.
39. K. Marx, *Towards a Critique of Political Economy*, *Works*, 13:7– 8.
40. See K. Marx, *Capital*, *Works*, 23:228.
41. See Marx's letter to P. V. Annenkovu dated 28 December 1846, *Works*, 27:402.
42. See F. Engels, "Proiskhozhdenie sem'i, chastnoi sobstvennosti i gosudarstva" ["The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State"], *Works*, 21:175.
43. V. I. Lenin, "O gosudarstve: Lektsiia v Sverdlovskom universitete 11 iulia 1919 g." ["About the State: A Lecture at Sverdlovsk University, 11 July 1919"], *Works*, 39:70–71.
44. See *Integrity, Unity, and Multiformity*, 348–62. (Note 16 above.)
45. K. Marx, "Economic Manuscripts 1857–1859," *Works*, 46:464.
46. E. M. Zhukov, "Nekotorye voprosy teorii sotsial'noekonomicheskikh formatsii" ["Some Questions of the Theory of Socio-Economic Formations"], in *Problemy sotsial'noekonomicheskikh formatsii: Istoriko-tipologicheskoe issledovanie* [*Problems of Socio-Economic Formations: A Historical and Typological Study*] (Moscow, 1975), 11.

9 The Whole-Interactive Approach to Philosophy of History: A Criticism of Reductional Monism and Asystem Pluralism

V. N. Sagatovsky

1. PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY: HOPES AND REALITY

What could we expect from a philosophy of history? The satisfaction of our intellectual curiosity or indisputable guidance for practice? I'd like to avoid both extremes. The first, however, is not an idle pastime. Without it, the culture is deprived of an exit to infinity; its cultural potential and creative freedom wither. But does our intellectual curiosity have a single and finite goal? Against it are both practical reasons and the value-orientation which is my fundamental axiological axiom: a single "abstract principle" – the term of Vladimir Solovev, – must not shield the wholeness. But the second extreme is even more compromised. The impatient wish to change the world brought a one-sided and immature understanding of reality: the thought that the world could be completely understood and transformed. Moral responsibilities for consequences rest not only on practical workers, but on theoretical ones as well, those who took a new "abstract principle" for a copy of a real wholeness.

By all means, philosophy of history should participate in real history, reflect the historical experience, and be the most important component of human progress. But let's bear in mind the doctrine of M. Bakhtin about responsible deeds.[1] How are we to distinguish a deed from an action, a whole-oriented action? There must be not only practical deeds but also theoretical ones, since the latter can be traced in the former through latent transformations. If the Inquisition could speak on behalf of Christianity, and Stalin and Pol Pot on behalf of Marxism, then in both cases there was something incomplete. (I certainly don't exclude ill-intentioned distortions, but they must have some roots in the distorted material.)

Can any modern philosophy contribute to solving global problems in the third millennium, the "post-new" era of history? I think not. But, let's hope that an acknowledgment of the existence of such a philosophy is not just based on the illusion that we need only understand it better, improve and apply it, to have it fulfill all expectations. Let us, instead, examine some basic ideas of a philosophy of history which would not flash like the Owl of Minerva at the funeral of history but, instead, promote society's further proper continuation.

2. IN MONISM'S DEADLOCK

For the last two centuries, two philosophies manifested themselves in European culture: the ancient Christian and the rational and systematic. Christianity contributed to historical understanding with three basic ideas: creationism, eschatology, and hierarchy. Creationism opposes something beyond the world and creating it (natura naturans), to the created world (natura naturata), which includes human history. Thus, history does not create itself hic et nunc, but realizes its external creative origin in itself, being a means, a building block to it. In the traditional idealistic forms, this something is God, Hegel's absolute idea, Spengler's pra-idea of culture. History, from this point of view, is the training ground of God, as Arnold Toynbee calls it. But since there is a creator, there is the supreme purpose toward which history strives as an end. The ideal (God's kingdom) coincides with the end of history in such an eschatological pattern. This meaning remains even in Toynbee's pluralistic pattern which uses different culture variants, with God probably aspiring to His own variant. In any case, Einstein's statement "God does not play dice with the universe" is taken as a matter of course in classical philosophy of history. The idea of a "guideline" given by history remains fundamental. Given the ideal purpose – and the criteria for its achievement – then history may be represented as a hierarchy of high and low stages with respect to the beginning and the end. Therefore, one origin, one purpose, one scale of appraisal: monism.

Is this idealistic monism changed when history and nature are confined to the phenomenal world? It depends. Positivism and Marxism break with Christianity in the matter of faith. Now, a rational scientific proof is required instead of the authority of revelation. Everything that is fetched out from the "Well of Eternity" that cannot fit into the schema of modern science is declared a "pseudo-problem." Reality is identified as observable and calculable fact. But as M. Heidegger showed, this presumably plain, completely calculable and governable world appears suddenly to be "uncountable" and punishes us by global problems for our positivistic self-satisfaction, for our loss of "respectfulness to being."

In this sense, an attempt to change God by Man did not bring any good. However, there is something more interesting here: the main attributes of the old idealistic God remained even in the positivistic-materialistic variants of monism.

The composition of the system has changed. The structure remained the same. The system given by God now must be construed rationally by Man. In this construction, the same fundamental ideas appear. Creationism? Yes, only now, instead of God realized in history, we have the scientifically substantiated conceptions of creative persons, or the objective laws of economy, of technology, and of informational systems. Man again serves Plato's eidos, which results only from himself. Eschatology? Certainly, but now it is a kingdom of progress (technical, economical, social), where all fundamental contradictions in human being are solved (dialecticians, who by definition could not do without contradictions, add: there will remain only "unantagonistic" contradictions . . .). Hierarchy? Surely, but only not of highest heavenly and lowest natural forces, rather the highest and the lowest with respect to the guideline resulting from the new God personified in progress. Will nature bear this, our "progressiveness," for a long while? It does not matter. Something serves something: if the world does not serve God, then nature serves Man, and man serves Progress (technology, economy, its own "sacred" necessities, its Utopia, merely fashion and advertisement). And something wants to be the origin of the origin, the highest result and the top of hierarchy: monism.

Each time, such monistic claims put the communities that accept them into deadlock, and now there is a global one: thermonuclear, ecological, anthropological catastrophe. Why does it happen? Why do the searches for one Origin – manifested in creationism, eschatology, and hierarchy – turn out to be a worthless strategic paradigm?

It is probably because in such ideology is a very imperfect way of life, an attitude to the world which, unfortunately, is characteristic of the majority of human communities. "Mono-logical" activism considers everything to be the object of will and cognition ("Knowledge is Power"). For all this, it is not important who claims to be such a person "striving to power": God, the Fichtian, collective subject, the Only of M. Stirner, Nietzsche's superman, the progressive class forcing universal happiness. In all cases, it is disrespect toward the world to consider it as just a means and an object, to disregard its self-value and the active subject at its center. Interaction and dialogue are then neglected as a foundation for normal organic relations in the world, in favor of this attitude: if you want to rule, to achieve, to win, then convert a person into a thing. But this could boomerang: sooner or later the aggressor himself turns into a thing. Estrangement becomes even stronger, and all attempts to eliminate it with estranged means only intensify it. Monism is the methodological consequence of the activism of the Only Beginning: an imperious monologue and the will to transform all diversity. It is the consequence of the absolutization of relations between subject and object. Monism disregards the interaction and dialogue of subjects (of any kind) in free cooperation and co-creation. It focuses instead on their arbitrary manipulation of each other.

The peculiar mixture of tendencies in an authoritarian version of Christianity and positivism has led mankind to this crisis: that God (or Progress) is pleased that we should order the world as we understand God's will, or the objective laws of evolution. Even a materialistic understanding of history, predominant in Marxism, could drop out of this order. Marx himself began as a humanist. A subversion of private property, as the economic base of bourgeois life and alienation, was his resolution of the main human contradictions, so as to return man to his own self. This is quite clear from Marx's "Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844" and other early works (unfortunately, for one hundred years, Marxism has been developing without the comprehension of these works, the initial program of its founder). I am absolutely sure that Marx's economic works were only one element (necessary, but insufficient) of a giant program which remained incomplete. Marx did not want to be a groundless Utopianist, and he grasped at the economy as the long-waited, objective foundation of social development. It is not mere chance that in the 1890s young Marxists asked Engels if they understood Marx properly: that economy determined everything, and that the superstructure and human consciousness were only its reflection and consequence. Engels in his answers to the letters of Schmidt, Borgius, and Starkenburg admitted they had grounds for such an understanding.[2] In their struggle with subjectivism, the founders of Marxism paid primary attention to the objective laws of the means of production. But such an interpretation of Marx is wrong. As in any historic epoch, the complex *interaction* of economy and other spheres of public life took place where objective economic laws force their way in *at the end.*

However, the theory of such interaction has not been fully developed in Marxism. On the contrary, the pattern for society's development as a social-economic structure was proposed by Marx with classical accuracy, where the dominant determination of all public life was the method of material production. It is this pattern which became the basis of a "materialistic history understanding." Absolutization of the pattern was made in spite of Marx's warnings that his conclusions refer not to "society as a whole" but to the peculiar stage of the historic development of a special region (roughly speaking, the bourgeois period of history in Great Britain).

It is obvious that the objective laws of the development of material production must be taken into account in a whole pattern of societal life, and this is the main point of Marx's discovery. V. I. Lenin compares him with Charles Darwin for that.[3] It is evident also that material production can play a dominant and determining role in different cultures and at different times. Just as human disease is determined by external and internal factors, so the whole pattern of society is determined by the interaction of external and internal factors which differ positionally. Nonetheless, in practically every working variant of materialistic historical understanding, the economy is predominant. Let us point out the main difficulties and contradictions which this leads to.

First, Marx's understanding of *public* production as the whole production of public life contradicts the equating of the whole and its one sphere, *material* production. But if that is the case, then the means of public production could not be limited only to the means of production of material wealth. To be sure, material production is the necessary base of public life and, in some special range, it determines this life. But the question arises, do we eat to live or do we live to eat? Affirming the latter gives way to the absence of spirit, in particular to that which, during the initial phases of perestroika, was called the "residual principle." At first, the plan is fulfilled in material production, with culture supported from residue. The strategic fallaciousness of such an approach is now clearly enough realized.

Second, does material production "in general" and "ultimately" determine public life, or only, in some particular circumstances, determine its interaction with other spheres? What is the point, for example, in stating that water boils "in general" and "ultimately" if you do not explain under what pressure it happens? Similarly, materialistic historical understanding stresses that the economy functions objectively, irrespective of human will and acknowledgment. Is this really so? Of course, some economic conditions are independent of man's will and acknowledgment, having their own objective tendencies to function and develop. But, on the one hand, doesn't the same happen in politics, morals, religion, etc.? Are they only the reflection and the result of economy? Don't they have their own objective tendencies of development, which the economy is as much dependent upon as the boiling point of water on pressure? On the other hand, cannot man choose subjectively in any sphere, beginning with economy, to the extent of his outlook? Surely not. Freedom is not a "realized necessity," but also the possibility of choosing this necessity on the basis of knowledge. In various situations, this and that are represented in any sphere and any human action to various extents. What is the meaning of the statement that only one factor always, objectively, determines all the others (provided you mention "ultimately," admitting its "inverse influence" and the "relative self-dependency" of uneconomic spheres)?

Third, economic materialism inevitably results in an *abstract sociologism* as regards man. Arguing against the abstract approach to man, Marx in his "Thesis on Feuerbach" defines man's nature as marked by his mastering and adopting a special public behavior in the process of socialization.[4] It is really so? Can all of man's nature be reduced to that? (Marx himself never mentioned this reduction, by the way.) To see material production as primary is to see man as only hands, as an element in modern "man-machine" systems, and a small part in a state machine: in a word, as a function of something superpersonal. This point of view commonly used in practice strongly contradicts the idea of man's being the final goal of public development. Either everything is for the sake of man (the absolutization of which brings us to Utopianism), or is for the sake of the objective laws of Progress (the absolutization of which brings us to totalitarianism). Or maybe the truth lies not in the dictates of one of these principles, but in their reasonable interaction.

Fourth, economic materialism and abstract sociologism are able to give rise only to a scientific pattern of society, i.e., not humanitarian, not hermeneutic. The inner subjective world (culture and personality) is reduced to a reflection of the objective laws of production development, and becomes thereby suspect and even anti-social in the extreme. Thus, "philosophy without man" appears, distressing our philosophers and publicists. Could that have been otherwise? They first declare a man to be a tabula rasa, an absolute function of the External, and then complain of his lack of spirituality.

Fifth, economical and sociological monism has this fundamental methodological contradiction: in public life, matter is declared to be primary and determining, but unfortunately there is no agreement on either understanding matter as a whole or interpreting its social being. Indeed, if we assume that matter in society is material production – i.e., the technical and economic sphere of the production of things – then this brings the contradictions mentioned above. If one refuses to equate the material with the physical forces in nature and the technical and economic forces in society (this vulgar point of view is really prevailing) – and strictly sticks to the definition of matter given by V. I. Lenin in his "Materialism and Empiriocriticism" as an objective reality existing irrespective of consciousness and reflected by consciousness[5] – then there arises the contradiction of the "chicken and egg" paradox. Which of them is primary?

Man is capable of acting purposefully and creatively. The objective result of his actions depends on an ideal image in his mind. Human consciousness is immanent in human activity: consciousness is not formed in, and does not manifest itself beyond, the range of activity, whereas activity is realized within consciousness (of course, it doesn't exclude the subconscious, but the subconscious is ideal). That is, in any sphere of human life, neither matter nor consciousness can be the only absolute that determines origin. Matter – the objective conditions of human life as a whole, and not merely "material" production – determines consciousness where it gives the content of ideas and sets the conditions of their realization. Consciousness (the subjective reality of culture and personality) determines social matter where, using external data, it is able to create new ideal content as the projects of a new objective reality. Subjective and idealistic monism (where everything is determined by subhuman spirit) and materialistic monism (where everything is determined by objective reality itself) deprive man of freedom and creative work, and turn him into a function of something external.

The material *interacts* with the ideal, each determining the other at any level of human development – if we deal with a human being. We shan't deal here with the complex problems of analogies to human beings. We confine ourselves to the statement that the results provided by cybernetics and synergetics help us even here to conceive of interaction without the metaphysical assumptions of someone like Teilhard de Chardin.

3. PLURALISM – WORK CONDITION, BUT NOT THE WAY OUT

A classical Marxist, reading the above, will blame me for eclecticism and "factor theory." Since I deny one absolute determining Origin, then I affirm a random set. In monism, diversity was always something evil and inferior (consider Parmenides and Plotinus). Thus, some economy, some policy, a little bit of religion – all factors of equal value – result in unharmonious, unsustained theory, an eclectic jumble.

No, I don't oppose monism to pluralism, one reason to many conditions and factors. Absolute monism gives rise to dictatorial intolerance, absolute pluralism to playful irresponsibility. Correct pluralism should be compared to "brain storming": at a given time, "mad" ideas appear and cannot be refused. Pluralism's broad, unbiased approach allows the play of all possible alternatives. But just as brain storming cannot, so pluralism cannot give a final answer without expert valuation of all the thoughts involved, out of which rises the sense of a "whole." To construct a whole automobile, one needs its basic design, not just knowledge of subsystems. It is not difficult to find deficiencies in a technical design; it is much more difficult to discover bad, even criminal, social design. This latter fact instills a deep sense of responsibility in the honest researcher, and cheap aplomb in a dishonest one.

As K. Popper says, pluralism is good for the "partial patching of social holes." The elements of a whole philosophy of history allows us only to meditate, and to understand one very important fact: there isn't one way to the Temple, and there is, in fact, not merely one Temple. Comparative evaluation of ways and aims and procedures is necessary. At this stage, pluralism does not work. There is a need for a system-forming idea. Again monism? Let us try to show that there is the possibility – and now even the necessity – of finding a third way.

4. ALONG THE WAY TO SYNTHESIS

Briefly expressed, the essential concept of the philosophy of history represented here is that society is an open interaction of the basic components of life, with endless (in principle and in intention) formations of polyphonic wholeness. This wholeness is not brought about by dictate, but by self-expression not oriented to a presupposed result. Its formation is not a hierarchic motion from inferior to superior, but the interaction of parities: equal participants in co-creation, co-evolution. Since "wholeness" and "interaction" are here basic, system-forming concepts, the proposed approach is called a "whole-interactive" one.

To explain this term, three questions need to be considered further: (1) What is a "fundamental scheme" that describes the least necessary composition of wholeness able to sustain such a way of life? (2) What principles and basic ideas permit us to understand such wholeness adequately? (3) What fundamental ways and what coordinates permit synthesis of such wholeness in theory and in practice? Our answers, because the problem is undeveloped, are brief, preliminary, and hypothetical to a great extent. I do not give a "doctrine" or a complete theory, but only trace the ways of research.

5 THE BASIC SCHEME

Imagine the conceptual scheme of society's system in two versions: Object and Category. In both cases are represented those elements and attitudes which are necessary and sufficient for elucidation.

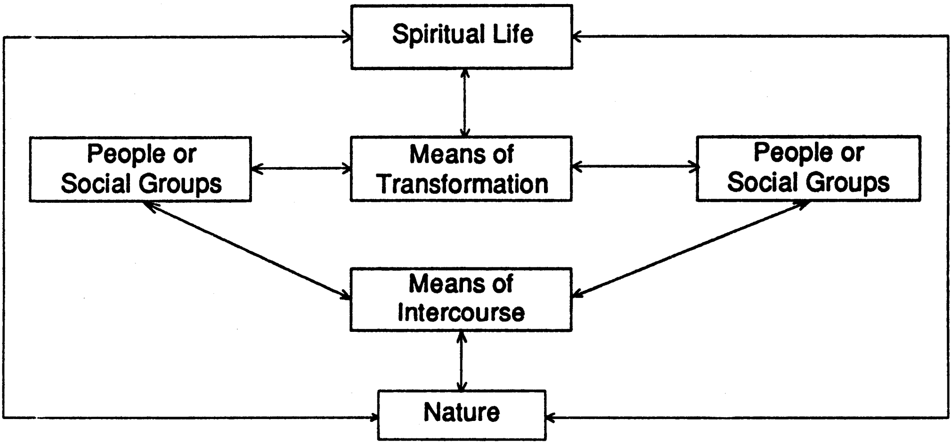

Figure 1

The Object scheme of society as a system is shown by Figure 1 (the arrows represent the different influences of system elements on each other).

The specific character of the social system, as we see, consists in the fact that: (a) people transform nature and society with the help of artificial intermediaries, the means of transformation (technology in the broad sense of the world); (b) people begin their interaction with each other, communicating with the help of artificial intermediaries, the means of intercourse (knowledge, value, norms in symbolic form); and (c) the artificial intermediaries, the actions of transformation and intercourse, are produced on the basis of artificial (i.e., biologically uninherited) information programs created in spiritual life.

Therefore, society, being a part of nature, following the laws of physics and biology, develops and functions in the created, artificial world of technology, language, and spirit. This world lives according to its own laws – social and psychological – and causes people to enter into special relations with the world and with each other according to the laws of this new level of being.

Further, this scheme distinguishes the main spheres of transformative activity (production) as a special way of the life of social systems. That is, adaption to the environment is a specific way of the life of biological systems, not its transformation by artificial means. This adaptation occurs through: (1) material production (the transformation of nature and the

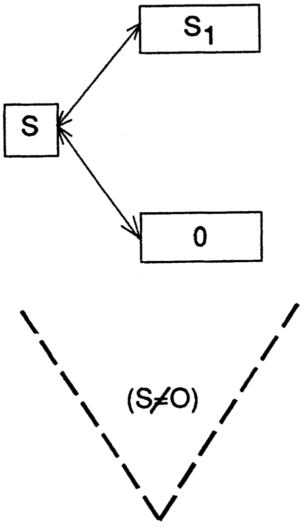

Figure 2

development of technology); (2) man's formation (socialization of the homo sapiens species, their transformation into members of society who are able to play necessary roles in transformation and intercourse); (3) the production of organization (those norms, institutions, and relations that channel the agreed-upon, single-minded activity of a given social system); and (4) spiritual production (the information production that governs society's activity).

We have a purely scientific scheme: society is represented as a functioning object. Such an approach is necessary but insufficient. Limited by it, we would remain in the positivistic and scientific interpretation (representation) of human life. The Category scheme will add another model (Figure 2). In the upper figure, S and S_1 are subjects; O represents objects; the lines connecting S to O and S to S_1 represent interactions; in the lower figure, the dotted lines represent a "crater" connecting the S-O-S_1 plane in limited space and time (physical, biological, social, and psychological), where the level of infinity and eternity is such that the contradiction S to O is senseless: that is, S=O.

To better understand this scheme, we give some explanations. By the subject, we mean any system in the sense that its functioning is determined by an internal information program (from plant tropisms to the human outlook). The object is the same system in the sense that its functioning is determined by the action of external factors. Thus, both man and nature, in different ways, are both subject and object. Subjective-objective relations could exist between man and nature, between people, between the person and society – and vice versa, as to himself, etc. The same is true for the S-S relations. Such understanding is not merely a scholastic piece of subtlety. To show its significance for life, it is sufficient to mention that without the ability to accept the purposes and values of another subject (person, group, nation, culture) there is no humanism, and without S-S relations modern ecological consciousness could not be formed.

But except for the S-O and S-S_1 relations, there exists a special human relation to the world-level (culture, nature, he himself) where the division into subject and object is meaningless. That is, the human relation to infinity (and eternity) or unpredictable reality is inexpressible in rational, discursive knowledge. Broadly, this is a religious relation, or remote communication with the world. But I do not connect the religious relation with a faith in God or with mysticism. The point is that any phenomenon or event in the world is not bounded to its *functional* meaning (i.e., given by a role in some finite system). In addition, this special human relation can symbolize world-wholeness, and thus favor our spiritual impulse to eternity and infinity. It is not necessary to characterize this spiritual state by some religious experience in the narrow sense. Try to reduce the sense-wholeness of any metaphor, any aesthetic image, any faith to structures, functions, and to sets of discursive statements. A positivistic man, doing so, becomes a creature like Antaeus, large but helpless when unbound from Mother-Earth.

Thus, in any of our interactions with phenomena, we can use three types of relations: S-O, S-S_1, and remote communication.

Let us now compare a Category scheme with an Objective one. Among the relations fixed in the Objective scheme, only one – the subjective-objective – brings about two additional dimensions: the subjective-subjective, and remote communication. For example, a man becomes, now, not only a working force (the S-O aspect), but also a creature capable of understanding other persons and, thus, needed in their understanding (the S-S_1 aspect). He becomes also a part of a whole, a unique monad constructing its relations with a universum in the stressed field of interactions between polar and interconditional value orientation: for freedom of extension and complicity with the transcendental (an aspect of remote communication). Spiritual life is oriented not just within the production of world-transformation programs (the S-O aspect), but also in a hermeneutic trend (the S-S_1 aspect). Spirit opens for the response of Cosmic information processes; i.e., it grows from regulation-means to self-value (the remote communication aspect). Nature as a larger and laboratory turns into what F. Tutchev said about it:

> A Nature isn't what you think –
> She isn't a mold, she isn't a mask.
> She is a person, she isn't a thing,
> A Nature can answer and she can ask.[6]

Things and technology, with their functional meaning, turn out to be the elements of culture manifesting its spiritual (or spiritless) essence, if, respectively, as Heidegger says, they reproduce its own tendencies or, on the contrary, they litter this communication and block it. Any production (not just a material one) appears to be one of the aspects of a whole human life.

Any component of the objective scheme of society, if it is not isolated and absolutized, becomes one of the "abstract principles" of philosophy of history. I give here some examples. The absolutization of religion gives rise to the objective-idealistic explanation of history as the will of Providence. The transformation of spiritual life into a monistic principle gives a subjective-idealistic understanding. Concluding that everything comes from natural factors brings various versions of naturalism (geographical determinism, sociobiology, etc.). The desire to understand everything through laws of material production comprises material understanding in its economic and abstract-social variant. The tendency to think highly of the means of transformation or intercourse gives birth to various technocratic variants (models of industrial or informational societies, etc.).

The task is not to oppose these monistic statements to pluralism or eclecticism (to oppose "one and only one" to "this and that and both"), but to understand all these origins as indispensable moments, though insufficient separately, of a *multidimensional* whole. A methodologist must reveal the principles of such understanding.

6 BASIC PRINCIPLES AND IDEAS

This article began polemically with creationism, eschatology, and hierarchy. The suggested principles of philosophy of history can be presented as an opposition to such elements of origins. I oppose to the idea of creationism the idea of interaction; to the idea of the eschatological ideal realizing the creative origin, the idea of a polyphonically developing wholeness; to the idea of hierarchy determining societal development (from the creationistic origin to the eschatological ideal), the idea of *open formation.* We shall give concrete expression to these latter basic ideas and formulate them as some methodological principles of the philosophy of history here being promulgated.

The ideas of creationism and of interaction give basically different causes for the historical process. In the first case, the researcher's consciousness finds one origin of history, which determines its course. In the second case, the interaction of the factors of the historic process is causa sui. The crux of the interaction principle is that no absolute reason, no "thing," causes consequence. Substance produces other "things," but interaction within a definite wholeness, with its emergent qualities, could give rise to another wholeness with some other emergent qualities. Neither chicken nor egg is first. Interaction turns this paradox into another like it. Thus, the interaction principle tends to reveal the emergent qualities of an historical wholeness (eras, centuries, types of culture), as well as the correlation of its factors – factors which, with necessity and sufficiency (the systematic-deterministic variant) or with definite probability (the probablistic variant) – causes these emergent qualities.

The eschatological ideal suggests a cruel "main" trend: even from the moment of the Big Bang, the highest forms of social being have been programmed. The idea of polyphonically developing wholeness does not completely reject the fact that stages of development must be connected functionally by means and purposes, reason and effect, superior and inferior. But it adds the understanding that all parts of the whole are, in principle, important: as Dostoyevsky wrote, "The child's tear is not less important than the happiness of a whole mankind." In modern international relations, the rights of any nation do not depend on its numbers and powers.

The principle of polyphonically developing wholeness requires the unity of the components of the historical process: their *functionality*, their significance for existence. The eschatological goal, with the inferior serving the superior, becomes secondary to the idea of co-creation in a significant uniqueness that is quite against the absolute dictate of the Plato-Hegel essentialism. It is clear that the interaction principle discounts Progress as a constant sacrifice of something (nature, culture, personality, etc.) that is insignificant to something else which is absolutely significant by definition. In contrast to evolution in the eschatological frame, we get co-evolution, harmonious in terms of the past (memory), the present (joy in existence), and the future (hope). An evolutionary stage is not meaningful merely as a preparation for the next stage. Each is meaningful in itself, as a participant in the co-creation of wholeness (culture synthesis, V. I. Vernadsky's noosphere,[7] etc.). This is without a scenario. It is programming without the absolute brought from the outside by God's will, Progress, or some other charismatic Utopian goal.

The eschatological predestination of the historic process leads not only to an absolute hierarchy of inferior and superior, but to the absolute hierarchy of development *processes* themselves. It is quite natural to think that, if there is only one Temple, then there is only one way to get there: with one prophet, one leader, a division into "true" and "untrue," with complete victory within the paradigm "we-and-they." Such absolute determinism has certainly been overcome in the scientific world, and we can look forward to a corresponding process in the social sciences. The idea of open formation in societal development should further such a process.

The formation of historic wholeness is not determined simply, as Aristotle would put it, by reason of a goal (the eschatological ideal). It has no predetermined end, nor is it the last stage of a development. The principle of an open formation means that at any point of history (hic et nunc), the future has a *probablistic* character. It is open to the probabilities of the creative development of objective reality and of the subject. From each such point, probabilities open out not linearly, but as a fan of potentials. But the realization of probabilities can be changed at any moment. Of course, this does not exclude some reliable prognoses of the kind "if tendency A remains and the quality of B, C, D factors do not change, at the moment T, then, we shall get a consequence E." However, nobody can guarantee that the infinity of the world and of human activity will rush into finite systems. The probability of it could be counted upon, but the absolute determining of *creation* is a contradiction in terms. Each Bakhtinian *deed* is not only the execution of the before-given task, but also becomes a *co-being*, drastically changing the very character of being.

The people that understand the historic process as an infinite, free, open formation of wholeness in a polyphonic co-creation of interaction refuse to fulfill God's will. They don't want to be God's puppets. But neither do they want to become similar to Gods in an arbitrary creatio et nihilo. They respect not only their own being, but the right of all other participants of the historic process to realize their inner tendencies. They want not a monologue by a single, creating, divine "voice" in the world, but a human "poly-logue" in open co-creation. This is the only outlook suitable for preserving our life into the 21st century.

A last remark. The last statement surely does not confuse the real state of things (probablistic, but not a course fully given by one origin) with the desired one (the ideal of polyphonic co-creation and co-evolution). Surely they differ. In practice, there is any amount of violence, submission, fight for power, etc., in history. This is quite obvious. But we must realize, first, that a will-to-power cannot be sanctioned by superior sanctions, and, second, that mankind nowadays must resolve whether to have mutual understanding and cooperation, or death. The ideal of conquering self-will does not become religious and socially Utopianist. The first necessary condition of the solution of global problems is common survival.

7 THE COORDINATES OF SYNTHESIS

Thus, the course of history is a probablistic formation of anthropological wholeness resulting in the interaction of all elements of the historic process. The category scheme has already revealed the multi-dimensionality (in particular, the multi-functioning or multi-structuring) of this wholeness. Is it possible to construct a multi-dimensional matrix of research into the synthesis of the historic wholeness? Without claiming a complete solution to the problem, we try to deal with some additional points.

A linear historic process proposes its vision in one "color": either God's will, production laws, the outstanding person's activity, a purely sociological process, a particular case of biological process, etc. All these *points* really take place, but just as points of a whole. Try to imagine them as starting points, as the coordinates enabling us to single out the basic aspects of the multi-dimensional space of historic wholeness. For all this, the characteristics of each such dimension could be applied to any other one.

1. Any historic wholeness is described by the opposition of "social" to "biological." Well, for modern mankind, the flourishing of both of these states – of the socio-cultural memory and the "genofund" – are important. In every nation, a definite socio-cultural formation and a type of ethnos (in L. N. Gumilev's meaning, as a natural formation)[8] can be seen.
2. As a biosocial creature, a man (and any human community) appears as an element of nature-history processes (Marx's formulation). These processes obey their objective laws and, as a worker and a subject, man is able to choose among them to incarnate his subjective values in objective reality. As Kant pointed out, man lives simultaneously in the world of nature and in the world of freedom. The opposition, "activity (determined by the subject) and the natural and historic process (determined by the object)," forms

the second axis. For example, from the point of view of the active approach, we can compare ancient Indian, classical Greco-Roman, and western European cultures according to the basic values that they want to realize (the desire to get away from sufferings and to nirvana, to the "golden mean," to maximum supremacy over the world, respectively). But it is also important to understand the objective social and economic conditions that contribute (without a one-to-one correspondence!) to the uniqueness of cultures – and to examine these conditions with the help of the national-historic method. Both methods supplement each other, just as corpuscular and wave images supplement our understanding of elementary particles.

3. There are common things both in nature and society, in activities and in the objective processes, and these regularly repeat. At the same time, there is something here that is inimitable: a unique individuality. In a general philosophic sense, Hegel's historical methodology leads to the polemics of Dilthey and to one polarity, "the common essence (nature)": the reduction of historical cognition to scientific models. On the other hand, Kierkegaard leads to Rickert and to the other polarity: the "unique individuality (essence-existence)." We may see, however, that these oppositions are mutually complementary. We can, in fact, research the common essence of American and Russian societies at any time and express our results in an intelligible way, a way that could be verified (or falsified). But for any nation, the words of Tutchev could be repeated:

> Our mind can't comprehend
> This country. It is unique for us.
> And we can't measure – we must trust
> Inconceivable Russialand. (256)

People's individualities are expressed symbolically, without reduction to the forms of discursive cognition. History (as any other humanistic discipline) is not simply a science. It consists also of something which is outside science, something that does not make cognition better or worse than physics: just different.

4. The natural and the social, activities and historical process, common essence and individuality – these oppositions live and, in turn, can be considered along one more axis: that of the finite and temporary and the infinite and eternal. All of these give their evidence in a definite system of interaction (in a correlate) and, hence, could be

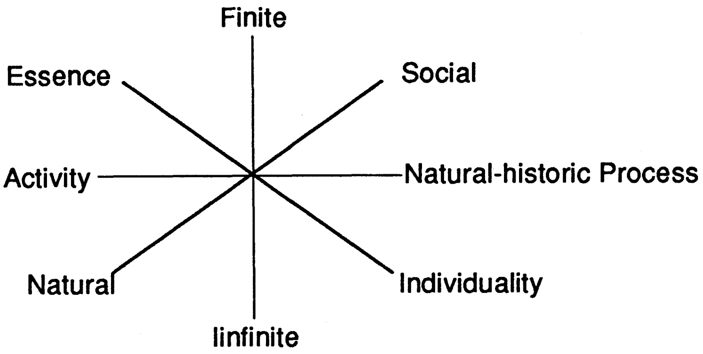

Figure 3

described in some terms: in intervals of abstraction. And they can and must be seen sub specie aeterni. The first one is a matter of science, the second one of art, religion, and philosophy. The historic wholeness could not be obtained by purely scientific means: whole reality requires whole representation. Schematically the described system of axes can be represented by Figure 3. Thus, we obtain a multidimensional matrix for the description of different historic realities, for the comparative analysis of different types of culture. Competitive variants of philosophy of history are attempts to see the all-wholeness through one methodological "slit." Through it, you can see boons: discoveries of the corresponding concept. But each time, the desire to represent an aspect, a model, or an abstract origin as a wholeness brings us to paradoxes in theory – and mistakes in practice. Surely, I do not claim to see the whole. But I consciously attempt to go this way.

Notes

1. M. M. Bakhtin, *Philosophy of the Deed/Philosophical and Sociological Problems of Science and Technology*, Yearbook 1984–85 (Moscow, 1986).
2. See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [*Works*]), 2nd edn (Moscow, 1971), 37:394–96, 416–21; 39:174–76.
3. See V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [*Works*], 5th edn (Moscow, 1971), 1:130.
4. K. Marx, "Thesis on Feuerbach," in *Works*, 3:3.

5. V. I. Lenin, "Materialism and Empiriocriticism," in *Works*, 18:131.
6. F. Tiutchev, *Poems* (Moscow, 1957), 121; my translation.
7. See V. I. Vernadsky, *Thoughts of a Naturalist*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1977).
8. See L. N. Gumilev, *Ethnogenesis and the Biosphere of Earth* (Leningrad, 1989).

Part III
Interactions

10 New Thinking and the Study of the History of the United States in the Soviet Union

N. N. Bolkhovitinov

For decades, the theme of America has been one of the most popular in Soviet historical literature. Since the early 1970s, hundreds of books and articles have been published every year on the history of the United States and its present-day role in the world. Specialized journals have appeared: *U.S.A.: Economics, Politics, Ideology*; *American Yearbook*; and *Problems of American Studies*. Hundreds of specialists in American history have become doctors of sciences in the USSR, or what was the USSR until recently. The successes and achievements of these Americanists are well known.[1]

This article is not about those achievements and successes, but rather about shortcomings and unsolved problems, about "blanks" or "black holes" in the study of U.S. history. The quantitative growth of our American studies is not, unfortunately, accompanied by an improvement in the quality and application of modern research methods, nor by growth at the professional and scholarly level. Moreover, although the academic merit of many of the theses on the history of the U.S. presented for scientific degrees is questionable, I do not remember a single case of any thesis on the history of the United States being rejected. Nor do I recall a single negative review of a book written by a Soviet Americanist. The absence of serious criticism and the urge to publish has led to the multiplication of poorly written and compilatory works, many of which have been gathering dust for decades in bookshops (and this in the context of a great shortage of books in general).

But perhaps the gravest shortcoming of our Americanists is their tendentiousness. A widespread denigrating and vituperative approach has excluded comprehensive and objective investigation, and reduced some fields of history – especially, modern American foreign policy – to vacuous insubstantiality. Such works tend to accuse the United States and its leaders of nearly all mortal sins and thus to portray the U.S. to Soviet readers as a persistent enemy. As N. Popov pointed out with justification:

> a veritable culture of confrontation, constant struggle against the "world bourgeoisie" and its baneful influence has appeared in our country. It has its own establishment, its own bureaucracy, its own science, its own language and, most important, its own customer, since an external enemy was needed for justifying internal problems: the shortage of resources and machines, food products and housing, mismanagement and poverty in general, and, especially, strong power and taciturnity of the people in a setting of hostile encirclement.[2]

It must be said with regret that historians have made their own contribution to confrontational relations with the United States.[3] Most characteristic of the Cold War period were such book titles as *American Imperialism – the Worst Enemy of the Peoples, Parasitical Predatory Imperialism,* and *Piratical Road of American Aggressors.* It is indicative that one reviewer found the title of the book *Blood-Dripping American Imperialism* not sufficiently imposing and entitled his review *Biography of a Beast.*[4] For many years our most influential and gifted Americanists – among them political observer V. S. Zorin, historian N. N. Yakovlev, writer and columnist G. A. Borovik – presented the United States and its leaders as the culprits of nearly all the misfortunes of mankind and as avowed enemies of peace and progress.

One may object that this was long ago, and that everything changed in the second half of the 1980s. Much has changed indeed, but far from everything. In a book by a capable young historian from Moscow University published in 1988, Ronald Reagan is presented merely as a person with ultraright views whose policy was "in crying contradiction with the interests of all mankind."[5] Comparatively recently, *Pravda* carried an extensive article, "Who Launched the Cold War . . . "[6] It was based on substantial documentary evidence and even reproduced a diagram appended to the "Pincher" plan (1946) indicating the main nuclear strikes against the USSR, with a detailed account of the ill-famed "Dropshot" plan (1949), which was to incinerate 85 percent of Soviet industry and about 65 million people. Yet the question arises: Did not our own military plans include targeting missiles on the territory of a potential enemy?

Do not get me wrong. I have no intention of relieving successive American administrations of their share of the blame for the rise and continuation of the Cold War. It can be taken as fact, even according to the writings of American historians themselves,[7] that the USSR after the Second World War could not have presented a real threat to the U.S., which had the monopoly on atomic weapons and possessed considerable superiority in the air and on the sea. The American economy not only suffered no damage during the war but gained a great impulse for rapid growth. We should also not forget the enormous human losses of the USSR as a result of the war and Stalin's reprisals. Nearly half of the country lay in ruins and was bleeding. Of course, this does not allow us to relieve Joseph Stalin and his entourage of the responsibility for the aggravation of relations with the west and, in particular, with the United States.

Foreign policy is always closely interwoven with home policy. Persecution of literature and art, crude anti-American propaganda, the struggle against cosmopolitanism and "Lysenkovism" in science, and, finally, the rupture with Yugoslavia at the end of the 1940s could not have failed to contribute to the growth of fears in the west about the USSR and the deepening of the Cold War. Relations with the U.S. were also aggravated by the anti-American campaign in our press, including the writings of Soviet Americanists.

Recently, attention has been drawn to the fact that our archives, especially departmental archives – those of the foreign ministry, the ministry of defense, the Communist Party, etc. – were closed. Nor can we say in the foreseeable future that such archives will be available to researchers: 400,000 cases are still classified. Only recently were documents of the M. N. Tukhachevsky case of early 1937 declassified.[8]

Traditionally strong points in American studies in the USSR are those of the working-class and democratic movements, historiography, and Russian-American relations. But even in these fields there are many gaps, shortcomings, and "blank spots." I am not sure in particular whether Soviet Americanists draw a generally adequate picture of the working-class movement, nor investigate the position of the working class with sufficient objectivity. We have extensively and justly criticized the "Commons School" in the west, which almost fully leaves out the unorganized labor movement. But, then, Soviet Americanists, too, have until recently dealt mostly with the trade-union movement, which unites but a comparatively small part of all American workers. The rise of the wages of workers (and other groups of the U.S. population) and the numerical size of the Communist party in the U.S. also continue to remain blank spots.

Analyzing the diverse historical literature abroad, our scientists until recently concentrated attention on the so-called bourgeois methodology and to a far lesser degree studied the positive aspects of the achievements of American historians in the examination of particular problems, application of mathematical and interdisciplinary methods, etc. A rigid class approach has long divided historical science into parts (so-called bourgeois historians and Marxist historians) and, instead of a living and varied picture of the development of world historical science, we have received a perverted black-and-white scheme. Indicative of this, for instance, are the titles of chapters in a recent book by A. E. Kunina on American historiography: "A Turn to Subjectivism," "Pragmatic Presentism," "Objective Relativism," "Methodological Groping," "The Influence of Neo-positivism," and "Impasses of General Schemes." Characterizing the present state of historical science in the United States, Kunina, writes: "In the early 1980s a turn appeared towards extremely subjectivist approaches prompted by the philosophy of existentialism and phenomenology. The historian is required to construe history, to get inside it. Such concepts as 'understanding,' 'hermeneutics,' and 'perception' became predominant."[9]

In general, class analysis must be applied properly. Brought to the point of absurdity, it may, and often does, become a hindrance for a proper understanding not only of separate historical events but also of the overall picture. Certain one-sidedness in this sense is revealed also by the works of our colleagues among American radicals and, in particular, by Howard Zinn. "The cry of the poor is not always just, but if you don't listen to it, you will never know what justice is," he writes, and deems it necessary to tell the story of the Constitution from the point of view of the slaves, Andrew Jackson's presidency as seen by the Cherokees, the Mexican War as seen by the deserting soldiers of General Scott's army, and the rise of industrialism as seen by the young women in the Lowell textile mill.[10]

In drawing attention to the role of "silent" and oppressed strata of American society, present day radicals (Howard Zinn, Jesse Lemich, Alfred Young, and others) have made a contribution. At the same time, it must be admitted that Zinn's *People's History* does not give a full and rounded idea of American history. In a certain sense, it is no less erroneous to look at historical events only "from the bottom up" than only "from the top down," through the eyes of "great white men." An objective scientific study of history is possible only if events are examined from all sides – from the bottom and the top and, most importantly, nontendentiously, with due regard for all materials available.

For example, time was when the Philadelphia Convention was characterized as a "conspiracy against the people," and the Constitution of 1787, as soon as it emerged, was called conservative and reactionary.[11] It might seem that this is a thing of the past. But even in 1988, despite all calls for "historicism," an authoritative collective work emphasizes that the American Constitution "was created for the defense of the class interests of the bourgeoisie, for the protection of the primary American freedom

– the freedom of private enterprise, and the primary bourgeois right – the right of private property." As for the present time, the Constitution only "sanctions and fetishizes the existing political mechanism of the dictatorship of monopolies."[12]

But did not the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of 1787, and the Bill of Rights express general human interests? Did not they lay down the foundations of a state based on law? Did not the Constitution of 1787 legislatively endorse the principle of division of powers for the first time? Did not the Declaration of Independence proclaim the great principle that "all men are created equal" and are endowed with "unalienable rights," and that "among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"? Given this, why do our Americanists so persistently and inventively seek to prove the bourgeois substance and class limitations of these documents? Of course, the Constitution of 1787 has its limitations and shortcomings. In the 18th century, constitutional rights did not extend to the entire people of the United States. But a stubborn struggle was waged for the extension of such rights, in the form of amendments extending constitutional provisions to black citizens, women, and American citizens reaching the age of eighteen.

Somehow Soviet scholars have treated the very concept of a law-based state as bourgeois, and law and morality as strictly class concepts. Wasn't this the reason why we so easily came to Stalinism and the complete liquidation of law in general? Our historians and jurists must revise their attitudes towards democratic rights and the American Constitution of 1787. This constitution was not so much a "Thermidorean Reaction" consolidating the power of the propertied, as it was a republican manifesto reflecting the gains of the revolution, recording the principles of limited and divided powers and the creation of a state based on law.

It should be recalled that the American constitution is the oldest written one in the world. It has stood the test of time, supplemented with only 26 amendments (including the initial ten – the Bill of Rights). It lives on because the ideas of the American revolution of the 18th century, embodied in constitutional principles, expressed not only the narrow interests of the bourgeoisie and planters, as Soviet Americanists have pointed out so profusely, but, more importantly, expressed general human ideals and legal norms. A law serving only the narrow interests of one class or ruler has few chances of being so long-lasting. I would add parenthetically that a constitution as the fundamental law of a country cannot be changed every 10–20 years to suit momentary interests. It is a pity that the Soviet Constitution was changed so frequently – in 1918, 1924, 1936, and 1977 – and yet we have just begun to create a law-based state.

The great documents of the American revolution of 1776 had their limitations.[13] Beyond the framework of its lofty principles were half a million blacks, tens of thousands of servants, the entire female population of the republic, men under 21, and also Indians. Even if we take only the free part of the adult white male population, beyond the pale of the Declaration for various reasons were wage earners, tenants, nonnaturalized foreigners, Jews, and even Catholics. The logic behind all these restrictions must be seen only in the context of the conventions of the 18th century, and here historians must have their decisive say.

Dr. Johnson's dictionary indicates that the word "man" implies wealth and independence. Precisely, property and independence connected with property were seen at that time as the most important component of liberty and an indispensable condition of citizenship. Wage earners were dependent on the employer, tenants on the landlord, and Catholics on the Pope. Even professors at Harvard or at Oxford were dependent on their universities for their pay. But a farmer in Massachusetts, hardly making ends meet to feed his large family, was also a fully independent person interested in the prosperity of the state where he lived and had voting rights. On the other hand, a woman getting married turned over to her husband any property she may have held, and thereby could not lay claim to the civil rights her husband had. (True, widows and unmarried women were deprived of full citizenship for other reasons, by a tradition which was fully surmounted only in the 20th century.)

A rigid class approach pushed American studies in the Soviet Union into a self-induced isolation from world science and thus into dogmatism. In the last fifty years, we have not translated a single major work by an American historian, apart from the writings of two well-known Marxist authors, Herbert Aptheker and Philip Foner (the only exception being Vernon L. Parrington's work and even it appeared many years after it was written).[14] What would have happened to physics if only works written by Communist physicists in other countries were translated in the USSR. Long overdue is the task of drawing up a concrete plan for translating the best works of American historians for the next 10–15 years, which should include in particular the works of Richard Hofstadter, Richard B. Morris, Bernard Bailyn, Jackson Turner Main, Edward Pessen, and others. Research begins where our predecessors stopped. Remaining enclosed in our own circle, we foredoom ourselves to a fiasco and waste our scientific potential on the investigation of long-known facts and truths.

If we believe that history is a science, then, as in every other science, the aim of historical research is the search for truth. Not comments on a current "historical" plenary session or congress of the CPSU, but precisely the search for the objective truth. I have already written about the responsibility of an historian: the need to adhere strictly to the historical truth, not to incite hatred and hostility but to contribute, however modestly, to closer relations between peoples, to overcome mutual misunderstanding and ignorance and replace them with knowledge and mutual understanding.[15] When the case is presented for the choice of a particular theme for a monograph, reference is usually made to its political topicality and next to nothing is said about the need of establishing an objective truth – for example, ascertaining how a particular decision was adopted, sorting out details of some complicated development, clarifying who is responsible for particular mistakes and, possibly, crimes.

It is particularly difficult to pass judgments on questions connected with corruption among bureaucrats, to identify those implicated in bribes, etc. In this context, my personal experience is illustrative. For the last few years, I have studied the history of the sale of Alaska on the basis of Russian and American archives. I wanted to elucidate how the decision on its sale was made. Who was for the sale and who against it? Who gave bribes, who received them in Washington, and in what sums? For this, I had to scrutinize not only publications and official documents, but also the private correspondence of U.S. congressmen and Secretary of State William H. Seward, documents of the Russian envoy in Washington, E. A. Stoeckl, materials of the Russian-American Company, and so forth. I found exhaustive or sufficiently convincing replies to many questions connected with the sale of Russian Alaska. True, the question of bribes was not solved in the end, for so far no trace has been found of the secret report of finance minister M. H. Reutern to the Tsar of 13 December 1868, or Stoeckl's final report about how $165,000 was spent "on purposes known to Your Majesty."[16]

In the past, the focus of Soviet researchers was first and foremost on diplomatic relations: the utterances and deeds of famed political personages, generals and diplomats, tsars and presidents. Excluded was the main element of international relations – the people, and, among them, the finest, most educated and active representatives: scientists, public figures, and men of letters. Now, on the basis of diversified documentary evidence, it is being demonstrated that the history of relations between Russia and America was opened by direct and indirect contacts between Benjamin Franklin, E. Stiles, and other American scientists, and their St. Petersburg colleagues: M. V. Lomonosov, G. W. Richmann, and F. U. Epinus. The Russian public, from N. I. Novikov and W. N. Radishchev to the

Decembrists and A. S. Pushkin, paid the closest attention to America. Studies were undertaken of contacts between the "Boston Shipowners" and the Russian-American Company and the commercial, scientific, and cultural ties between the two countries in the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century.

This approach is characteristic of later Soviet and foreign publications in this field. Important to mention is the publication, almost 1,300 pages long, of some fundamental Soviet-American documents, published simultaneously in Moscow and Washington in 1980 and highly commended by the scholarly community.[17] I could mention other books and articles as well.[18] It must be admitted, however, that there are still some deficiencies and lacunae in the study of Russian-American relations (this is especially true of the last third of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century). One such lacunae is the study of the Jewish question in the relations between Russia and the United States which, as is known, led in 1912 to the denunciation of the trade treaty of 1832. Soviet scholars have begun the study of this question and we can hope that some serious writing on the matter will appear soon.

The main obstacle to the work of Soviet Americanists in the field of American history, as in other fields of the social sciences up to the second half of the 1980s, were rigid ideological restrictions and the dogmatic treatment of Marxism. "Lysenkovism," routed in biology, continued to dominate in the social sciences. Scholarly journals and publications were jealously on guard to prevent the appearance of even the most innocent "heresy" and were little concerned with maintaining even an elementary professional level of published books and articles. It is not surprising therefore that serious research articles fully disappeared from scientific publications, giving way to an abundance of all sorts of popular editions and propaganda pamphlets.

Even our leading Americanists gave less and less attention to careful checking of factual material and made quite incredible mistakes for which there could be no justification whatsoever. For example, in his biography of Benjamin Franklin, published in a large printing, R. F. Ivanov wrote: "Franklin's works fall in the middle of the 18th century, when such giants of science lived and worked as Newton, Huyghens . . . " But Newton died in 1727, and Huyghens lived mostly in the 17th century! "Moralist writer Duc La Rouchefoucauld" was mentioned in the book as Franklin's frequent guest, although he died back in 1680. Lastly, the book presents as "Franklin's opponent" John Adams, the ambassador in the Netherlands and US president from 1796, envoy in Russia from 1809, and so on. Clearly, the author confused John Adams and his son John Quincy Adams. Curiously enough, in the book and in a chronological table we find a wrong date of the signing of the final peace treaty in Versailles (1782 instead of 1783).[19] I do not doubt that Ivanov, of course, knows perfectly well when the War for Independence was concluded and when the peace treaty was signed. But this misprint once more testifies to the amazing carelessness of the author and the publishing house about the factual aspect of the matter.

Perhaps one of the weakest points in Soviet works on American history is the scholarly apparatus. Unpardonable mistakes in footnotes have become so common that we can speak of them as the rule rather than the exception. I will confine myself to citing one already known example. The American journal *Soviet Studies in History* translated a small chapter from Professor O. A. Rzheshevsky's book on bourgeois historiography.[20] Nearly half of the footnotes and quotations, including three statements of the U.S. president, contained mistakes, or else required notes were absent altogether. No wonder that Professor John Stephan had to supply the translation with special factual notes and amendments, which surpassed in volume the scholarly apparatus of the work itself.[21]

Many inaccuracies and mistakes occur in collective works and symposia, with articles and chapters differing in content and professional level. Thus, in a prestigious historical work published under the auspices of the Institute of General History of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the well-known American historian G. G. Van Deusen appears under several names: G. G. Van Deisen, G. Desen, and V. Deisen. I have only to add that the correct Russian spelling of his name is G. G. Van Duzen. In historiographic works, major American scholars are sometimes given diametrically opposite characteristics. In the same book, Daniel Boorstin is first characterized as an objective historian and then as the head of "neoconservatives." Richard B. Morris is presented first as an extreme liberal and then as a representative of "neoconservatives."[22]

In her article about the sale of Alaska, T. M. Batuyeva depicted *The New York Tribune* as a supporter of the purchase of Russian Alaska, although in fact this newspaper was the main opponent of the 1867 treaty. And it is hardly surprising to anyone that this article ignores all foreign literature on the subject in the last 40 years.[23] A. V. Valyuzhenich, in his book *American Liberalism*, plagiarizes from L. B. Alter's work *Bourgeois Political Economy*, sometimes in close, at other times in full coincidence of texts.[24]

The moral aspect of all this is a matter of grave concern. Some of our Americanists write with amazing facility about what "must be" or "is advantageous" or "topical" but have great difficulty writing about what actually is. For the better part of the last few decades, the most ordinary objectivity and accuracy in the presentation of facts was nearly a proof of civil courage. Even now, when perestroika has seemingly removed the main obstacles to a serious, objective, and systematic study of U.S. history, changes are taking place very slowly, so slowly that only a new generation of historians may be fully free from the burdensome legacy of the past.

In the training of our young Americanists, things are not developing as smoothly as it might appear. The institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences are detached from higher education, and thus not many serious specialists have been enlisted in the educational process. Special seminars for undergraduates and postgraduates at leading academic institutes would be useful and, in particular, at the Institute of General History, in joint sessions of the Department of the History of the U.S.A. and Canada with the staff workers of the Laboratory of American studies at Moscow University. Seminars and lectures would be good in other towns where there are groups of Americanists: for example, in Leningrad (or, now, St. Petersburg), Kiev, Odessa, Kazan, Tomsk, Kuibyshev.

Every year the History Department of Moscow University invites one American professor to lecture. This is an excellent and very important initiative. But it would also be worthwhile to invite one of our leading Americanists to Moscow University, to give special courses on topical problems of U.S. history and act as a supervisor of graduate theses, a practice of Moscow University in the past. This could occur also at the Lenin Pedagogical Institute, the Institute of International Relations, and other educational institutes.

The quality of theses presented for scholarly degrees must be improved decisively. The primary and main condition is not to block the appearance of good works, and for this the stiff limitations of volume must be lifted. Why must theses on history be limited to 195 or 395 pages? A researcher must have the right to write as many pages as are needed. The same goes for monographs. Lastly, the paramount and indispensable condition for bringing about a turn in the study of U.S. history in our country is systematic professional ties with foreign – first of all, American – scholars, regular publication here of the best foreign books and articles, and the ability of our Americanists to work in the archives and libraries of the United States.

Notes

1. *History of the U.S.A.*, eds G. N. Sevostianov *et al.*, 4 vols (Moscow, 1983–1987); *Guide to the Study of United States History Outside the U.S.: 1945–1980*, ed. Lewis Hanke, 5 vols (White Plains, NY, 1985), 3:510–92.
2. N. Popov, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 1 March 1989, 14.
3. A distressing impression is produced by an annotated list of works on the foreign policy and diplomacy of the U.S. compiled by L. M. Strukova, Parts 1 and 2 (Moscow, 1972). Also see *United States History and Historiography in Post War Soviet Writings, 1945–1970: A Bibliography*, ed. L. Okinshevich (Santa Barbara, CA, 1976).
4. R. Sh. Ganelin, *Zvezda*, no. 8 (1952):187.
5. V. A. Nikonov, *Republicans: From Nixon to Reagan* (Moscow, 1988), 249–74; see also his *The Iran-Contra Affair* (Moscow, 1987).
6. 29 August 1988:6.
7. Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (New York, 1965: Russian translation, Moscow, 1968), and *Cold War Essays* (New York, 1970); Lloyd C. Gardner, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941–1949* (Chicago, 1970); David Horowitz, *The Free World Colossus: A Critique of American Foreign Policy in the Cold War* (London, 1965); *Corporations and the Cold War*, ed. David Horowitz (New York, 1969); Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943–1945* (New York, 1968); Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945–1954* (New York, 1972); Walter Lafeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945–1966* (New York, 1967: 2nd edn, 1972; 3rd edn, 1976); etc. A detailed bibliography is given in Lafeber's 3rd edition, 293–309.
8. See Patricia K. Grimsted, "'Glasnost' in the Archives? Recent Developments on the Soviet Archival Scene," *American Archivist* 52 (1989):219–36.
9. A. E. Kunina, *U.S.A.: Methodological Problems of Historiography: Practice of Studies* (Moscow, 1988), 204.
10. Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York, 1980), 10.
11. *Modern History, 1640–1789* (Moscow, 1951), 1:165.
12. *Constitution of the U.S.A.: History and Our Time*, ed. A. A. Mishin and E. F. Iaz'kov (Moscow, 1988), 266; A. A. Mishin, V. A. Vlasikhin, *Constitution of the U.S.A.* (Moscow, 1985), 15 ff.
13. For background, see in particular: L. G. De Pauw, "Land of the Unfree: Legal Limitations on Liberty in Pre-Revolutionary America," *Maryland Historical Magazine* (1973):353–68.
14. Vernon L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, 3 vols (Moscow, 1962–1963); this was originally published in 1927.

15. See N. N. Bolkhovitinov, "How I Became a Historian," *Journal of American Studies* 14.1 (April 1980):114.
16. Archive of the Foreign Policy of Russia. Fund of the Russian American Company, Case 412, Sheet 430. Also see N. N. Bolkhovitinov, "How It Was Decided to Sell Alaska," *International Affairs* no. 8 (1988):116–26; "The Alaska Scandal (1867–1868)," *Voprosy istorii* no. 4 (1989):37–54; and *Russian-American Relations and the Sale of Alaska, 1834–1867* (Moscow, 1990).
17. *The United States and Russia: The Beginning of Relations, 1765–1814* (Washington, 1980).
18. See in particular: G. P. Kuropiatnik, *Russia and the U.S.A.: Economic, Cultural, and Diplomatic Relations, 1867–1881* (Moscow, 1981; A. N. Nikoliukin, *Literary Relations of Russia and the United States: The Rise of Literary Contacts* (Moscow, 1981), and his *Interrelations of Russian and American Literatures of Russia and the U.S.A.: Turgenev, Tolstoi, Dostoyevskii, and America* (Moscow, 1987); R. V. Allen, *Russia Looks at America: The View to 1917* (Washington, 1988). For more information about the study of Russian-American relations, see N. N. Bolkhovitinov, *Russia and the United States: An Analytical Survey of Archival Documents and Historical Studies* (New York, 1986).
19. R. F. Ivanov, *Franklin* (Moscow, 1972), 140, 223, 232–33, 238, 253.
20. O. A. Rzheshevskii, *The War and History: Bourgeois Historiography of the U.S.A. During the Second World War*, 2nd edn (Moscow, 1984), 221–23.
21. *Soviet Studies in History* 24.3 (1985–86):77–79.
22. *The Main Problems of US History in American Historiography* (Moscow, 1971), 263–65, 225–26, 337, 7–8, 57, 52–53, 106, etc.
23. T. M. Batueva, "Expansion of the U.S.A. in the Northern Pacific and the Purchase of Alaska in 1867," in *American Expansionism: Modern Period* (Moscow, 1985), 120–33.
24. A. V. Valiuzhenich, *American Liberalism: Illusions and Realities* (Moscow, 1976). L. B. Alter, *Bourgeois Political Economy* (Moscow, 1971), see esp. 54–56, 82, 90.

11 Soviet Historiography: Modern Trends

A. N. Sakharov

The cover of a recent western publication on Soviet Historiography – a book by R. W. Davies – is illustrated with a cartoon by Vasily Alexandrov (which originally appeared in *Moscow News* in 1988): a Soviet school student, answering his lesson in history, asks his teacher, "Shall I give you the textbook version or the real one?"[1] It's a sad but, alas, quite a justified joke. Its truth is rooted in the fact that Soviet historical scholarship, especially the history of Soviet society, has been parted from historical reality for such a prolonged period that its tremendous ideological and political bias, torn off from the real dialectical criteria of historic research, limited the choice of factors determining the development of historical understanding. In particular, it exaggerated the social-economic factor, which was considered to be the only key to the cognition of the truth about subjects ranging from the destiny of the USSR to the activities and thoughts of an outstanding personality.

The names of some historic figures were pushed aside while others were glorified; major events were doomed to be forgotten and facts of little significance grew huge. Epochs sank into oblivion, and essential pages of world and native history were evaluated in ways that perverted their meaning in many respects. We often had myths instead of real history, and historiography was replaced by curses and the hushing up of some historians while others acquired incessant delights. It was obvious that Soviet historiography was parted from international science. Our historians were spellbound with their own successful research, and western scholars whose publications comprised evaluations different from those of Soviet historians were treated with distrust. The bugaboo of "history falsification" branded most western works, particularly those dealing with the history of Soviet society in particularly militant ideological and political ways. This has been written about recently.[2]

Works containing such negative tendencies were unreservedly swept away as antihistorical. And that's understandable. Not only the rejection of "crazy" evaluations but also the rejection of the effort to understand their origin are justified by historical science. That's why it would be fair to characterize the past tendencies of Soviet historical scholarship as an integral part of the spiritual world in which the Soviet people lived after the October revolution of 1917.

Revolution is not only powerfully dominant socially and economically, but spiritually. The world ploughed by the revolution reduced the many forms of social consciousness to certain dominant ones that reflected in their main dimensions the social structure as a whole. It is difficult even to suggest that, in a period of revolutionary social destruction, old historic research values could survive. They became subjected to the powerful invasion of time. Because historical research held the keys to understanding not just the social development that led to the revolution but to the interrelations of past, present, and future understandings, the revolutionary power had to occupy this important ideological ground. Even to a greater degree, it was important in reference to the development of Soviet society in the Stalinist period of the second half of the 1920s. Revolutionary ideas and slogans, simplified and transformed into "class" absurdities, finally turned history into a mere lap dog of politics. "Neutral" groups of historians were defeated. The rest – some painfully, others without pain, acquiesced (in the case of the latter, those with no research values, or those blind with devotion to the ideas of the time) – naturalized themselves in historical science as dictated by Stalinist rule. But still, crooked broken historical scholarship remained alive, the fact proven by a number of brilliant works that were published, particularly on prerevolutionary Russian history: the history of the working people of the country, whose revolutionary aspects were often hushed up by prerevolutionary historians. The metamorphosis of native historical scholarship was strange, sad, and yet understandable in many respects.

The development of modern Soviet historical scholarship reflects the development of society. Freed of revolutionary-totalitarian concepts (concepts finally transformed into pragmatic bureaucratic issues), human values are returning to people. Under such new conditions, our historic scholarship is gaining real research force. It is making an effort to revive native achievements, prerevolutionary historiography among them, to preserve and multiply the dignities of the Soviet research school, and to integrate itself in the framework of international science.

Objectively, it could mean, and to a great extent does, a complete reassessment of all former historic approaches to achieve new understandings of the historic facts we got used to. One should speak about the creation in our country of a full-flood history, comprising all the best inherited from native scholarship and from the international scholarship of the past, instead of merely noting that glasnost chiefly means the elimination of the "blank spots" and "oversights" of Soviet history, as it has become fashionable to say, both in here and in the west, in characterizing Soviet historic scholarship.

Our research nowadays has been appreciated in works by western historians, published both in their countries and here. There is the above-mentioned book by Davies and the article he published in what was then the USSR.[3] There is the generalizing work by Geoffrey A. Hosking, in which modern aspects of Soviet history are evaluated, historiography among them.[4] A collection of essays on Soviet historiography has been published in Japan.[5] Articles on the subject have been published by M. Reiman (Germany) and A. M. Nekrich (U.S.A.).[6]

For all the differences in detail, western authors studying the regularities of the development of contemporary Soviet historical scholarship share certain evaluations in principle.

First of all, a connection is noted between developing social processes and fundamental displacements in the evaluation of the country's historical past, primarily the history of Soviet society. In almost all western countries, the palm of primacy here has been given to men of letters and to publicists, but also to Iurii Afanasev, an historian who had published a number of exposés in the Soviet press. It is also noted, however, that a mobilization of conservative forces responded to the activities of the liberal authors, as became obvious after some articles were published by the Institute for Marxism-Leninism in the CPSU Central Committee and the C. C. of the Ukrainian Communist Party, and also after the publication of the letters of N. Andreyeva, F. M. Vaganova, and A. I. Ponomarev defending traditional historic views.

There were also reproaches to academic historical scholarship and the prolonged silence of professional historians; the publication of merely traditional materials in historical journals were also noted. Western writers noted a marked shift only in the autumn of 1987, when the so-called "round tables" concerning the history of Soviet society were held in some research institutes and in the journal *Voprosy istorii* (*Problems of History*).

A number of western publications have noted that the real progress of our historical scholarship is closely tied to the acknowledgement by our experts of the correctness of the evaluations and approaches of some western authors. For example, F. Coquin writes, "The current revisions of Soviet history have confirmed the prior conclusions of the 'western' historians rather than making any really new disclosures."[7]

Western commentators noted that the struggle against the heritage of the old "official" scholarship has put forward former "outsiders," such as P. V. Volobuev, V. P. Danilov, M. Ia. Gefter, etc., who had been marginalized for ideological reasons, although appraisals of them were also quite contradictory. While Davies and Haruki Wada appraise their efforts in an entirely positive way, relating them to the course of perestroika,[8] A. Nekrich nevertheless finds a lot of what he considers to be traditional history in their works.[9] The works of Davies and Nekrich mark with differing degrees of sharpness the well-known lag of official circles in our country in making historical appraisals as compared with the plunge forward of the mass media, which created a definite division in public consciousness and encouraged conservative or compromising tendencies, among professional historians as well, and retarded the general movement of historical scholarship.[10] The restraining influence on the development of historical scholarship seemed as well a "consolidation of the conservative block," which western writers related to mid-1987.

The significant standstill in working out new textbook programs in USSR history and the corresponding textbooks, was generally noted in the west, as well as the formation of a paradoxical situation in the country in 1987–89, when study in the spirit of the new thinking approached textbooks that reflected fully the old mentality, while history examinations in schools and institutions of higher learning were generally cancelled.

On the whole, western historians have quite correctly grasped the main processes going on in Soviet historiography that are connected with social phenomena. Still, to my mind, present historical scholarship is developing in a more complicated and controversial way than is reflected in some western views of it (or in some of our too-straightforward commentary), and, no matter how strange it may seem at first sight, in a more hopeful manner.

In this external canvas of events, as a rule, some very deep lines of development of our historical scholarship have vanished. First of all, one should say that scholarship has undergone a methodological overhaul. Retaining their attachment to materialist dialectics after having rejected that part of its content emasculated by dogmatism, a number of professional historians have posed the question of the necessity to refuse to take their orientation from party and government documents that contain general historical appraisals, and to take on the job themselves. They have proclaimed the need to strive for the depiction of the objective lines and properties of historical reality, its generalities and particularities, not to bewail historical events but to try to understand their causes, their results, to achieve some kind of alternative for socio-historical development, some insight into its deep dialectical contradictoriness, no matter how unpleasant this might prove to be for one or another powerful contemporary social group or force. But the main point was stressed – that one cannot look at history from the point of view of an intelligentsia philistine, an offended bourgeois, or a firmly encapsulated polemicist. One must appraise history's movement only from the point of view of those who create it, from the point of view of the people, again no matter how unpleasant this might be to the powerful of the world, to those who create bland historical stereotypes, or to those overturners of history who see in it only the opportunity to settle accounts with the past. These views found their most striking expression in T. D. Kovalchenko's 1989 essay,[11] but such thoughts had been frequently expressed both earlier and later, had resounded through the oral reports of social scientists at conferences, historians among them, and could be read in their articles.[12]

In the framework of this reexamination of the dogmatic approach to history, there has been a gradual rejection of the class criterion as unique and basic in the appraisal of historical phenomena, and the emergence of a multi-factor approach to historical events. Such an approach was traditionally characteristic of prerevolutionary Russian as it is of western historiography. Nowadays our historians completely accept this as their strong point, using not only social-economic approaches in the study of history, but taking into account as well such factors as, say, geographic ones (let us recall V. S. Solovev and V. O. Kluchevsky), the personal-psychological (Karamzin), religious ones (19th-century works on church history, say those by I. I. Golubinsky), the ethnic, the demographic, and others. In this way, a curious synthesis of most of the strong, positive part of Marxist scholarship and of non-Marxist elements of past and present historiography is coming into being that is already demonstrating a different qualitative level of research.

In this framework, one can speak of a more flexible approach by Soviet historians to the sanctum of former Marxist historiography: the formational approach to history. Such notions as "feudalism," "capitalism," "socialism," "slave-owning system," have become subjects of furious debates, not only in relation to world history but also in relation to the history of the USSR. I. Ia. Froianov, a historian from Leningrad, and his school, have called into question the existence of feudalism in Kievan in the 10th–11th centuries as it was formerly understood. P. V. Volobuev and his supporters actively put forward their conception of the multiform structure of Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, which also completely departs from Soviet historiography's former arguments, that depicted the capitalist mode of production as basic in the country at that time, with arguments that the proponents of the latter conception just as actively dispute. All of these are quite original approaches to the historical past. Together with a multi-factoral approach to history, they indicate new paths for the development of our contemporary historiography, which neither rejects western scholarship's best achievements nor yet merely copies it in their innovations (as it seems to some people it does).

The discussional approach to key historical problems is becoming broadly established. However, these discussions, the so-called "round tables" noticed in the west, represent just the tip of the iceberg. The most extreme part of these discussions startle our western colleagues. For instance, Iu. N. Afanasev rejects all of former Soviet historical scholarship as complete falsification, and this impresses some Soviet and western historians. But such an approach, rather more sharply political than scholarly, is just a part of the discussion's background, the scholarly essence of which is determined along quite different lines, which are getting stronger from day to day. I would refer here not only to the aforementioned "round tables" in our historical journals, but also to the large-scale discussions literally on every important aspect of our native history. Under the aegis of the USSR Academy of Sciences, History Branch, and the Institute of History of the USSR Academy of Sciences alone, all-Union discussions have been held on the character of the 19th-century Russian Liberation Movement, on problems of method in history, on the concept of a crisis in historical scholarship, and on the problem of the ways in which the different peoples joined Russia. For example, in regard to this last problem, in the discussion held in 1989 dozens of scholars from many Soviet Republics took part in a completely new way, having posed the problem in an historically plausible manner: the ways in which the various peoples entered into the composition of Russia, the peaceful and the violent methods by which this happened, and the living dialectic of this process.

So the talk by now is no longer about the "blank spots" in history, but about a large-scale reexamination of the whole course of Russia's historical development.

Here one can say frankly that this is how real scholarship should have it – today we are no longer satisfied either with the old Imperial Russian approaches, or dogmatic Stalin-Brezhnev pseudo-Marxist schemes, or classical revolutionary Marxist or Lenin's appraisals which reflected the level of their own times, or contemporary nihilistic or ultrapatriotic approaches, or those western views that also reflect a specific stage of scholarship, the time when these views were in direct scholarly-ideological polemic with the old Soviet historiography.

Now, new research approaches are being looked for. They should include the most valuable, true, and honest features of world scholarship. The main objective of this search is not merely the destruction of the old, but also the creation of new, constructive historical installations. But world historiography seems for the time being to be missing just this, the most important point. This is not a reproach, merely a statement. These particular deep processes are better seen by us here, while they remain for the time unseen from the side. And it is quite obvious that the rethinking of native history cannot be limited to studies of the problems of Stalinism and the history of the Soviet period. An historiographic "perestroika" now embraces practically all aspects of our native history, slowly but inevitably.

No question but that Soviet historians have been shilly-shallying a long time; conservative tendencies among them are still quite strong. Public consciousness instructed by publicist writings was more advanced than scholarly research. But M. Reiman (to say nothing of Soviet authors) had remarked that in these publicist innovations there was much that was superficial, inaccurate, that they contained hasty, unverified conclusions. And he also remarked that Soviet historical scholarship of the past had to be examined in a differentiated manner. If the "drafts" of E. N. Burdzhalov on the history of the October and February revolutions had been published in their own time, if the works by V. P. Danilov, A. Moshkov on the history of collectivization in the USSR, the works of P. V. Volobuev and K. N. Tarnovsky on the history of social-economic development of Russia in the beginning of the 20th century has been attended to, and if such historians as R. Medvedev and A. Nekrich had not been expelled from scholarship, the overall scholarly balance might well have been different.[13]

This slow pace in the scholarly reorientation of our historical scholarship is connected with cadre difficulties. Nowadays we mostly have an old corps of researchers, who, so to speak, repair their scholarly arsenal on the move. These are all the same people, the same pens. Young historians join the process actively, but lack experience and material. Time too is needed. One may need perhaps only a week to write a publicist essay, but weeks of time are needed for a research article and much more time to write a book. Nevertheless, even in these conditions, it would seem that historians are gradually adjusting their spectacles and our scholarly life can be seen as not so entirely barren.

First of all I'd like to note publication in a series of Friday editions of *Pravda* in 1988–89 a series of articles on key problems of the history of Soviet society: by V. P. Danilov, on collectivization,[14] by V. A. Kozlov and G. A. Bordiugov on Soviet history of the '20s and '30s,[15] and by V. S. Lelchuk and L. P. Koshelev on industrialization.[16] There were similar publications in other Soviet journals and papers,[17] involving the history of Stalin's terror, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact problem, different aspects of the Second World War, Khrushchev's thaw, and the following period of stagnation. Disentangling the problem of how Stalinism developed and its essence should also be mentioned.[18]

This is no longer the light cavalry of publicistics, but carefully weighted stuff drawing on new materials from the archives and elsewhere, and addressing both specialists and the mass reader. Here is an absolutely new vision of these problems, with former opinions rejected and new interpretations formulated.

In 1988–89, historians started to work out a number of new themes: the history of Russian emigration, the White Movement during the Civil war, and the ideological struggle at the beginning of the 20th century, taking into consideration all the contending political forces. Great attention was focused on the history of the political parties in Russia, especially those opposed to Bolshevism.

Alongside the studies on the nature of Stalinism, our historians have taken up themes for research that are not only new for us but for world scholarship as well: for example, how the administrative command system in the USSR was set up, the dissident movements, the history of informal social organizations, the history of the formation of a Russian identity, and others. There has been a significant shift in studying the political history of the 16th–20th centuries toward researching Russian liberalism, and the history of reforms and reformers. It has become typical of modern research planning to include themes spanning both prerevolutionary and Soviet history. Among such themes are the industrial, agricultural, and cultural development of Russia in the first third of the 19th century. The year 1917 no longer appears as an enchanted barrier dividing Russia into two opposite parts – one cursed, the other blessed.

A great and long unsatisfied interest in the personalities of history has also manifested itself. The historical journals have opened new sections under the rubric "Historical Portraits" and publishing houses have begun to issue books in a series called "Historical Biographies." Readers have shown broad interest in professional historical essays about Ivan the Terrible, Boris Godunov, the False Dmitry, Tsar Alexander I, Stolypin, Witte, and other prominent figures of the Russian state. Along with these, articles about the leaders of Bolshevism and the Soviet period whose names were hushed up for decades – Trotsky, Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky, Sokolnikov, Raskolnikov, Shleapnikov, etc. – are now published.[19] Their own works appear in books and magazines.[20]

But not only are biographies of the chief figures being worked out nowadays. Also being studied are those who fought against Stalin in the first, second, and third political echelons. Biographies as well of such supporters of Stalin as Kaganovich, Zhdanov, Beria, and also Khrushchev, and the "post-Stalinists" Brezhnev, Suslov, and others, are being composed based on new archive materials. Present historical publications are now being flooded with such materials. The hunger for historical truth is being satisfied more and more actively and widely. In this respect, though based on the western research tradition in many ways (books by R. Tucker, S. Cohen, R. Conquest, R. Davies, etc.), Soviet historians are actively going further than western scholars, fortunately helped by native materials at their disposal.

The development of modern historiographic research should be discussed in particular. A bold reappraisal of evaluations is taking place. The great work of the classics of native historians – Karamzin, Solovev, Kluchevsky, Miliukov, Kizevetter – is being reevaluated in a positive light. There are lectures on the historical concepts of Vladimir Solovev, Nikolai Berdiaiev, and other Russian historiosophers. This is reflected in the historic "Wednesdays" held by the Scholarly Council for Historiography and Source Study of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and in new publications, such as the two-volume work now underway: *The Russian Historians of the 18th to the Beginning of the 19th Centuries* and *Soviet Historical Science: Contemporary Evaluations.*

Moreover, western historiographers have noticed shifts not only in the field of Soviet historical studies (their attention has been limited, it is true, to publicist writings and the efforts of former "outsiders"), but also changes in the sphere of prerevolutionary historical research. H. J. Torke and T. Kuryuzawa have paid attention to debates in this field, especially on the history of Kievan Rus, which established an interesting connection to prerevolutionary historiography (Karamzin, Solovev, Kluchevsky).[21]

Yet although professional scholarship is making significant strides toward renewing its research arsenal, the very essence of the revolutionary "perestroika" in historical thinking tends to dispose two seemingly opposite historiographic currents to coexist: the current of ideas, emphatically expressed in publicistic articles, including the historical, and the current of classical historiography, which slowly but steadily gains strength on a new intellectual foundation. These streams not only oppose each other in a hostile manner – as "dilettantism" and "professionalism" – but they also nourish each other, creating a broad overall development of the historical mentalité, drawing into this development one segment after another of professional historians, although the gap between the provinces and the avant garde of scholarship is quite marked.

Its interaction with world scholarship is of special importance for the development of our historical scholarship. And this interaction strikes me as more complicated, varied, and contradictory than an elementary borrowing of ideas and subjects from the books of western authors. But first a few accompanying remarks.

1. It is difficult to imagine the development of different historiographic schools without interpenetrations, interactions, and interinterpretations. Even at the time of ideological struggle between Soviet historiography and western scholarship, these processes – stifled and distorted as they were – went their way. The further back into the ages our research went, the stronger was the sense of working together. The closer we were to the contemporary, the fewer were the points of commonalty, if indeed there were any at all. Still, it was at that very time that a trend to social history took shape in the west in which more and more attention was paid to the role of popular masses in history – always one of the postulates of Marxist history. On the other hand, Soviet historiography moved steadily toward a multi-factoral understanding of history, which had always been a strong point of western scholarship free of harsh social-economic schemes.
2. In the west as well as in the Soviet Union, ideological and purely scientific lines of research coexisted in a strange unity. One could make long lists of such historical literature in western countries and in the USSR. Both Soviet and western historical writing often carried out the orders of the ruling circles in that fierce, ideological war. It would be naive to think that all that has sunk into oblivion once and forever. The metastases of those anti-scholarly processes still make themselves known.
3. Influenced by tremendous social changes in the contemporary world, by the fall or weakening of totalitarian East-European regimes, by the powerful breath of historical facticity, the truth of research, the anti-scholarly, politicized tendencies in world historical scholarship are retreating in a rout before works based on scholarly standards. This process is most noticeable in our country, but it has involved scholars from other countries as well, who, to my mind, are strongly and positively influenced by the passionate desire for truth, for the truth of history, the frank rejection of the politicization of history, that now emanates from here.
4. In the light of current changes, it is more and more the case that differentiation in historical scholarship is based on scholarly rather than on national – that is, political or ideological – commitments. Thus, a number of Soviet and western scholars consider that Stalinism grew directly out of the events of 1917–18, from “War Communism,”

> and that, practically speaking, Lenin fostered Stalin. Other scholars – in this as well as in other countries – suggest that there is an insurmountable barrier between the "Lenin period" of the Russian revolution and Stalinism, with 1929 as the year of Thermidorean reaction, as Trotsky characterized it. One could name a lot of such interfacing Soviet-western scholarly "blocks" with regard to many problems of USSR history (Soviet history included). And that is a striking phenomenon of the present time.

We have turned our faces to the west not for the sake of conjunctural calculation, but for the scholarly truth. A number of the latest western works, especially on the 1970s and the early '80s, contain many interesting, valuable, and bitter facts about our life. Not long ago, we indignantly rejected as "bourgeois falsification" many facts about the crisis condition of our society, its crying inadequacies, gaps in its economy, its bureaucratic rule, its corruption, etc. Nowadays we examine those facts attentively, and accept the practical part of the matter in order to correct the matter itself. It was just recently that we indignantly rejected the very mention of the repressions of the '30s; and books about Bukharin and Trotsky, simply as such, seemed to us to undermine our system; introducing into historical research groups of names of historical figures repressed in the '30s and not rehabilitated either civilly or politically struck us as sacrilege. Today we try quietly to study the significance of those people in our history, and we follow with interest our western colleagues doing the same, on the basis of sources and scholarly methods. It was only yesterday that we did not want to hear that the New Economic Policy (NEP) was artificially curbed, and now we attentively follow, for instance, French research into the correlation of "War Communism," the NEP, industrialization, and collectivization. There is much in the debates of the French historians that strikes us as fruitful.

The 1987 "round table" of the journal *History of the USSR*, where I presented theses for discussion,[22] had a principal significance in this general turn to a many-sided collaboration with western historiography. Unfortunately, the round table was left unnoticed by Davies, Reiman, and the authors in the collection *Facing Up to the Past*. A number of well known historians participated in the discussion: I. D. Kovalchenko, Iu. N. Afanasev, O. A. Rzheshevsky, G. Z. Ioffe, E. V. Gutnova, N. G. Dumova, V. V. Shelokhaev, Iu. I. Igritsky, V. P. Buldakov, and others. They showed the necessity of giving up resolutely our long-time prejudiced ideological approach to western historiography, with its application of the "falsification of history" label to non-Marxist works. They called for an open, well-intended, honest dialogue with all historical schools of the world and for the return of our scholarship to the bosom of world historiography.[23] As a consequence of this call, a number of events resulted in the scientific Renaissance we witness today in the relations between native and world scholarship.

A few conferences on the crucial problems of the history of Soviet society were then arranged in the USSR within two-three years, to which western scholars were invited for the first time. For example, a Soviet-American meeting on the history of the USSR in the '20s was held in 1989. The participants discussed the fate of the NEP, the sources of Stalinism, Lenin's political testament, the emerging of collectivization and industrialization of the country, and the significance of formerly hushed-up political figures in Soviet history. A conference, in which scholars from France, England, and Hungary took part, was held the same year on the works of Bogdanov, Lenin's theoretical opponent in the Party.

In 1987, a gate was indeed opened, through which a stream of Soviet historians took part in international conferences in which they had never before participated. A delegation of Soviet historians went to Boston, to a World Congress on the history of East-European countries and the USSR. Then Soviet historians took part in conferences devoted to the 100th-anniversary of Bukharin's birth (held in Germany and England) and to the political biography of Trotsky (held in England).

At the same time, the number of western scientists invited here has grown steeply. Some of them – as, for instance, R. Conquest, S. Cohen, M. Levin, R. Tucker (U.S.A.), G. Hosking (England) – had remained persona non grata in Soviet science for a long time. Now they have become not only desired guests, but equally desired partners in our scholarly forums. Something paradoxical had occurred when the holding forth of foreign scholars within the walls of our auditoriums became a rule. What has always been normal for the rest of the world has become normal for us. The last breach made in this direction was the beginning of the scholarly exchange of historians with Israel.

It has become a usual practice to sign bilateral scholarly exchange agreements with separate universities and university consortiums in England, the U.S.A., Japan, Israel, Italy, that include the work of scholars in libraries and archives as well as their lecturing. Dozens of scholars, and lots of young people among them, have already made use of these channels of scholarly exchange.

The publication of the works of western scholars in Soviet journals, newspapers, and presses is a new phenomenon in our life. Books were published – R. Tucker's about Stalin, S. Cohen's about Bukharin, *The*

Great Terror by R. Conquest[24] – as well as articles by M. Levin, D. Geier, A. Nove, R. Davies, T. Shanin, and others on various aspects of the history of Soviet society and the problems of scientific collaboration. Works by western scholars of the past and present continue to be published.

The international conference "Russia, the USSR in the 20th Century," arranged by the USSR Academy of Sciences' Historical Branch and the Institute of History, held in Moscow in April of 1990, was a unique outcome of fruitful cooperation by Soviet and western scholars. The participation of seventy leading experts in 20th-century Russian history from sixteen countries of the world was a real sensation. The conference programme comprised section work on the "Three Russian Revolutions," "The War Communism and the NEP," "The Alternatives to Socialism Building in the USSR in the '20s–'30s," and "History of the USSR from the '50s until the '80s."

The Soviet and foreign mass media paid much attention to the conference's work. R. Tucker remarked when evaluating its results that "the Conference itself, in which for the first time foreign historians participated on such a wide scale alongside their Soviet counterparts, may be an omen of far-reaching change for the better in this field."[25]

Our historical scholarship is now experiencing complicated, interesting, inspired times. Its research potential, liberated by the social movement, strengthened by broad cooperation with western scholarship, is gaining power. That allows us to face the future with optimism.

Notes

1. R. W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution* (London, 1989).
2. See, for example, I. D. Kovalchenko, "Issledovanie istiny samo dolzhno byt' istinno" ("Factual Research Should Itself Be Factual"), *Kommunist*, no. 2 (1989).
3. R. W. Davies, "Sovetskaia istoricheskaia nauka v nachal'nyi period perestroiki" ("Soviet Historical Science in the Beginning Period of Perestroika"), *Vestnik Akademii nauk SSSR* (*Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR*), no. 8 (1990).
4. Geoffrey A. Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), 138 ff.
5. *Facing up to Past: Soviet Historiography under Perestroika*, ed. Takayuki Ito (Sapporo, Japan, 1989).
6. M. Reiman, "Perestroika i izuchenie sovetskoi istorii" ("Perestroika and the Study of Soviet History"), *Voprosy istorii* (*Problems of History*), no. 12 (1989); A. M. Nekrich, "Perestroika in History:

The First Stage" ("Perestroika, Current Trends and Soviet History"), *Survey* 30.4 (June 1989):22–43.

7. François-X. Coquin, "Comments on the Current 'Ferment' and Revision of History in the Soviet Union: Stakes, Limits, Outlook," *Facing Up to the Past*, 22.
8. Davies, *Soviet History*, 170–71; Haruki Wada, "*Perestroika* and the Rethinking of History in the Soviet Union, 1986–88," in *Facing Up to the Past*, 35 ff.
9. Nekrich (25) criticizes P. V. Volobuev for saying that the "Soviet people remained loyal to its fundamental historical commitment."
10. Davies, *Soviet History*, 129 ff., 135, 143 ff., 154; Nekrich, 26.
11. Kovalchenko, 86–88, 90–91.
12. See, for example, "Istoriki i pisateli o literature i istorii" ("Historians and Writers about Literature and History"), *Voprosy istorii*, no. 6 (1980); "Kruglyi stol: Sovetskii soiuz v 20–e gody" ("Round Table: The Soviet Union in the '20s"), *Voprosy istorii*, no. 9 (1988); "Kollektivizatsiia: istoki, sushchnost', posledstviia," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 3 (1989); "Kakaia ulitsa vedet k khramu?" ("What Street Leads to a Church?"), *Novyi mir* (*New World*), no. 7 (1987); "Istoki Stalinizma" ("Sources of Stalinism"), *Nauka i zhisn'* (*Science and Life*), nos. 11, 12 (1988), nos. 1, 2 (1989); V. Shubkin, "Trudnoe proshchanie" ("A Difficult Farewell"), *Novyi mir*, no. 4 (1989); and others.
13. See Reiman, 146.
14. *Pravda*, 26 August 1988, 16 September 1988.
15. *Pravda*, 30 September 1988, 3 October 1988.
16. *Pravda*, 21 Oct. 1988, 28 Oct. 1988.
17. See, for example, E. G. Gimpelson, "Vlianie grazhdanskoi voiny na formirovanie sovetskoi politicheskoi sistemy" ("The Influence of the Civil War on the Formation of the Soviet Political System"), *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 5 (1989); V. P. Buldakov, V. V. Kabanov, "Voennyi kommunizm: ideologiia i obshchestvennoe razvitie" ("War Communism: Ideology and Social Development"), *Voprosy istorii*, no. 3 (1990); and others.
18. See, for example, *Osmyslit' kul't Stalina* (*Conceiving the Cult of Stalin*) (Moscow, 1989); S. P. Kruashvili, "Politicheskaia doktrina Stalinizma" ("The Political Doctrine of Stalinism"), *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 5 (1989); D. A. Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia, I. V. Stalin: politicheskii portret* (*Triumph and Tragedy, J. V. Stalin: A Political Portrait*) (Moscow, 1989); R. Medvedev, "O Staline i stalinizme" ("About Stalin and Stalinism"), *Znamia* (*Banner*), no. 1 (1989); *Totalitarizm kak istoricheskii fenomen* (*Totalitarianism as an Historical Phenomenon*) (Moscow, 1989); D. A. Volkogonov, "Stalinizm: sushchnost', genezis, evoliutsiia" ("Stalinism: Essence, Genesis, Evolution"), *Voprosy istorii*, no. 3 (1990); and others.
19. See, for example, G. Bordiugov, V. Kozlov, "Nikolai Bukharin," *Kommunist*, no. 13 (1988); L. K. Shkorenkov, "Nikolai Ivanovich

Bukharin," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 7 (1988); V. I. Startsev, "Politicheskie rukovoditeli sovetskogo gosudarstva v 1922–nachale 1923 goda" ("Political Leaders of the Soviet State in 1922–Beginning of 1923"), *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 5 (1988); N. A. Vasetskii, "L. D. Trotskii: politicheskii portret" ("L. D. Trotsky: A Political Portrait"), *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* (*New and Latest History*), no. 3 (1989); A. V. Pantsov, "Lev Davidovich Trotskii," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 5 (1990).

20. See, for example, N. I. Bukharin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* (*Selected Works*) (Novosibirsk, 1990); "Fragmenty iz knigi L. D. Trotskogo, *Istoriia russkoi revoliutsii*" ("Fragments from Trotsky's book, *History of the Russian Revolution*"), *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 3 (1990); and others.
21. Hans-Joachim Torke, "The History of Pre-Revolutionary Russia in the Current Debate of Soviet Historians," in *Facing Up to the Past*, 47, 49–101, 103–5; Takeo Kuryuzawa, "The Debate on the Genesis of Russian Feudalism in Recent Soviet Historiography" in *Facing Up to the Past*, 111 ff.
22. See A. N. Sakharov "Sovremennaia nemarksistskaia istoriografiia i sovetskaia istoricheskaia nauka" ("Contemporary Non-Marxist Historiography"), *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 1 (1988):173–77.
23. Ibid., 177–202.
24. Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary 1879–1929: A Study in History and Personality* (New York, 1973); Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888–1938* (New York, 1973); Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties* (New York, 1968).
25. R. Tucker, "International Conference of Historians in Moscow," *AAASS Newsletter* 30.3 (May 1990):3.

12

The "Neutral Territory" of Mathematical Methods: Collaboration between Soviet and American Historians

Juhan Kahk

In what was formerly the USSR as well as in the U.S.A., some historians support mathematical methods in historical research and others are very skeptical of them. Theodore K. Rabb noted in 1983 that "quantification is still a cause for controversy" and that some historians still had only a "grudging acceptance of the computer."[1] From the beginning, the application of computers and more sophisticated mathematical methods in historical studies in the U.S.A. was accompanied by heated arguments. Supporters of the traditional approaches accused cliometrists of striving to "rearrange" historical science. G. R. Elton, for example, accused them of computer "idolatry," while W. O. Aydelotte claimed that they were attempting to prove "well-known truths while using an extremely clumsy scientific apparatus."[2] Sometimes such criticism was justified, as cliometrists tended to expect too much of the new methods, at any rate in the beginning. According to A. Bogue, the pioneers of quantification rather naively believed that their accurate results once and for all would settle old disputes and "shut open books." Indeed, as a rule, quantitative methods tended to produce results which raised new questions.[3]

Opinions still differ. Robert W. Fogel thinks that the "new-science" or "cliometric" history is close to the natural sciences, that it was born of the union of historical sources and advanced statistical analysis, and that representatives of the new trend are interested more in the collective and repetitive, like economic cycles and group behavior models, than the accidental and individual. Elton declares that the cliometrists' approach is superficial and shallow, because they disregard the individual in history and are incapable of recognizing the driving forces behind the movement of historic events.[4] Some American historians detected, in such skeptical assessments of the quantitative methods, agnostic echoes of the mistrust of history as a science altogether incapable of reaching beyond the subjective-idealistic interpretation of the past. Rabb states that at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, outstanding historians published interesting historical-psychological studies which gave a deep insight into the "inner world" of historical personages. But at the same time he describes this new tendency as some sort of "flight from materialism": "The large-scale, generalizable, material conditions of life – best described through such quantifiable data as demographic and economic statistics – are regarded as remote . . . . Comprehension is thought of as intuitive and rhetorical, not concrete or dependent on rigorous proof."[5] Here such open controversial discussions have not taken place. But, at the same time, it must be said that the number of "cliometrists" in this part of the world is still very small and, consequently, passive resistance to the introduction of mathematical methods into history is quite strong.

The differences in the attitudes of Soviet and American "cliometrists" were obvious when it came to the question: is it possible to apply Fogel's so-called counter-factual models to the interpretation of history? Fogel was criticized by his American colleagues, and at first also by Soviet scholars. In 1974 Soviet historians announced that Fogel's method was theoretically wrong (although some components of it could be used).[6]

But when we now return to those arguments we cannot help observing that, to a considerable extent, the differences of opinion sprang from, on the one hand, Fogel's failure to state his case clearly and, on the other hand, the failure of his opponents to grasp the essence of his ideas. Actually, while discussing counter-factual processes or situations, Fogel proceeds from the idea that historical development is not predetermined. Quite a lot depends on the will of the people and on their opportunities to express it. Differences here will produce different socio-economic results.

The conflict and struggle of different classes and different social and socio-political forces in history lead to only a few of the several objectively feasible alternatives becoming the reality. But, of course, while studying alternative situations, one must not make them up artificially. That is, they must always be supported by facts (this is often underlined by Soviet authors). Of course it would be more correct to speak of imitation or alternative models instead of counter-factual models. The alternative models describe certain hypothetical states of phenomena or processes which, to a larger or smaller degree, were possible in historical reality and which, at the same time, in certain other conditions, could not have been realized.

At this point, it must be said that, when in 1907–1908 V. I. Lenin studied the agrarian problem of Russia, he produced the theory of the two ways of the development of capitalism in agriculture. Using the "Agricultural Statistics of 1905" published by the Central Committee of Statistics he compared the probable efficiency of agriculture in case the revolution should succeed or fail. Lenin pointed out that one could also propose an equality-based dealing of land. Some of his opponents said that he had no right to suggest this, because the land had to go to the wealthier peasants who could buy it. "But such an argument is simply a misunderstanding," argued Lenin. "To prove the bourgeois character of the change I must find the best possible way from the narodniks' viewpoint; I have to suggest the achievement of the aims for which they are fighting. I must choose the moment closest to the so-called black redistribution of land."[7] The method of constructing alternative models does not mean constructing some imaginative unrealistic ways of development which have little to do with historical reality. These models enable us better to understand the historical processes by studying the tendencies of class struggle, by comparing the different results of different types of reforms etc.

Scientists who use models have been accused of ignoring the real explanatory power of the mathematical methods they use, of ignoring the fact that the factors they use explain only part of the studied dispersions. Rabb gives an example: conclusions were drawn from factors which explained only 27 percent of the variations.[8] But there are also convincing examples of cliometrists having collected data sufficient to explain most of the variations. As examples, one can point out the studies of political ballots where American scholars have measured the influence of long-term factors (such as party membership for a longer period), and also the short-term influences (activity of voters, popularity of candidates, the role of "third parties," etc.) in the elections in the U.S.A. from 1968 to 1980. As a result, 74–98 percent of the studied dispersion of votes was explained.[9]

Five of the most general factors of agrarian development in the gubernias of European Russia at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries (the technological level of agriculture, social differentiation of the peasantry, intensity of cattle breeding, capital input into agriculture, living standards of peasants and farm servants) explained altogether 77.5 percent of the character and level of agricultural production. By using regression models for analyzing the agrarian development of Russia during this period, L. I. Borodkin came to the conclusion that from a half to three-quarters of all the variations could be explained using only six equations – models which demonstrated that the quantity of grain sown and harvested depended first of all on the labor force and the number of cattle of peasant households, and that social differentiation depended on the same factors; that the price of land depended on its quality, and the rent on the price of land.[10]

Quantitative methods enable us to find out the general meaning behind the individual factors studied (or available) and at the same time to determine how much we cannot explain because of the lack of data. But sometimes it is said that because cliometrists use so many different methods, their results are open to too many interpretations. For example, Bogue claims that a study of the influence of the spread of slavery on the popularity of the Whig party in the Southern States of the U.S.A. can lead to diametrically opposite conclusions, depending on whether one would use Spearman's or Pearson's correlation coefficient (in the first instance the causal relationship would appear to be strong, in the second – weak).[11] However, this difficulty is not overwhelming.

On the basis of statistical data on the agrarian development of the European gubernias of Russia at the turn of the 19th century, Borodkin conducted a study using different methods: namely, the method of the extremal grouping of parameters, the centroid method and the method of main components. Naturally the models constructed with the help of these different methods were different to a certain extent, especially as far as the relationship between the data and influential factors was concerned, and therefore the numerical results arrived at in each case could well be different. And yet "the more important factors of the agrarian development of the European gubernias of Russia at the turn of the 19th–20th century appeared to have a similar structure regardless of the method used."[12]

When complicated mathematical methods are used, mistakes of subjectivity cannot be excluded. However, to diminish this danger historians ought not to start avoiding mathematical methods. On the contrary, they ought to master as many of them as possible as well as they can.

Methods for studying the stability and dynamics of social processes deserve special attention. By applying the methods of multi-dimensional analysis to a study of the peasant household during feudalism, we learn that the different types of households were all exposed to basically the same feudal or governmental oppression. While the core of the peasant household group was in a state of stability, the better-equipped households could strengthen their economy and, to some extent, accumulate – and the weaker households were getting weaker all the time. In historical reality, this meant that the better-endowed peasant households were lifted to a higher level (which actually means that their corvée obligations grew as they moved to the next group of households), and the weaker ones slipped to the lower level of household groups.[13] This regrouping did not on the whole change the social structure, which however cannot be interpreted as the lack of any mobility. Peculiar reciprocally activating processes of "social diffusion" were at work.

On the basis of many Soviet studies, B. N. Mironov claims that the continuous processes of social change in the feudal Russian village were confined to the framework of that formation. "One and the same peasant household could during the life span of even one generation move up and down the ladder of household groups." This type of mobility is characterized by "the long-term outbalancing of the strengthening and weakening of peasant households, which in the end led to there being approximately as many households with an improved social status as there were households with lowered social status."[14]

But at the disposal of historians-cliometrists there are methods which enable them not only to study changes in structure, but also to follow the destiny of individuals or economic units. In 1959, V. K. Iatsunskii published his study of the materials of several villages of the Rjazan gubernia during the first half of the 19th century. He had observed the individual destinies of all the households of these villages during a period of 40 years.[15] In 1965, I. D. Kovalchenko published the results of his study of individual peasant households. On the corvée manors observed by him up to the 1820s, a positive tendency prevailed. The majority of peasants were elevated from lower to higher groups; but after that time the opposite tendency became dominant. In a typical corvée village, the strong core of middle-sized households suffered no serious setbacks; the peasantry was not as yet turning into the proletariat.[16]

When the social structure of the Estonian village was analyzed with mathematical methods, the results were quite interesting as well.[17] Two sets of inventory materials, sixteen years apart, give the status of individual peasants at two points. A not too complicated mathematical programme depicts how many people belonging to a certain social group (or a locality) moved to a different group (or locality). It came out that a farm-hand had very little hope to become a farm master and, as the years passed, his chances dwindled. In such fields, where it is possible to use quantification (economic history, social mobility, and historical demography), Soviet and American historians find similar approaches to be efficient and fruitful.

Mathematical methods promoted the study of economic cycles and crises in the U.S.A. The amount of statistical information concerning economy grew considerably.[18] For example, the influence of economic ups-and-downs on the living standards of American workers at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries was investigated.[19] The new approaches increased the interest of scientists in socio-psychological themes,[20] as well as in subjects like blacks, ethnic minorities, women, and juveniles. Cliometrists who studied urban history concentrated on the "life experience of the simple people."[21] Quantification was linked to sociological methods. Differences in social dynamics for various social groups were brought out (the slim chances of negroes and immigrants to move upwards on the social ladder). Such rather obvious conclusions acquired real significance for American historiography when they were proven with mathematical methods.

Cliometrical methods were also used by those historians who strove to interpret the past from the point of view of the ordinary participants of historical processes, from the social framework of everyday life: slaves, servants, industrial workers.[22] From the 1960s American scientists became attracted to problems of "the origins and character of the social divisions that were so evident in contemporary society, on the subject of which existing historiography was either silent or . . . quite possibly wrong."[23]

On the other hand, contacts with American historians have had positive influence on the work of Soviet scholars, who were inspired to study new topics like historical demography and climatic factors, and to use new methods (like various mathematical methods and models). Georg Iggers has pointed out that the use of quantitative methods had a positive effect on Marxist historical science: "Much of Marxist historical research, particularly when it has freed itself from narrow partisan dogmatism, has struck a balance between quantitative analytical and qualitative hermeneutical methods which recognizes the need for both approaches but also their limits."[24]

The first results of collaboration between Soviet and American historians interested in mathematical methods are promising and may lead to important improvements in historical research. Even when "ideological chains" made it very difficult to organize cooperation between Soviet and foreign historians, in some fields such attempts were made. Good results were achieved. Since 1979, symposia have been held in the USSR and USA and their proceedings published in historical journals and special publications,[25] and there is every expectation that such cooperation will continue in increasingly fruitful ways.

Notes

1. Theodore K. Rabb, "The Development of Quantification in Historical Research," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13 (1983):594.
2. G. R. Elton, *The Practice of History* (New York, 1967), 8; William Osgood Aydelotte, *Quantification in History* (Georgetown, 1969), 19.
3. A. G. Bogue, "Kvantifikatsiia v 80-kh godah . . . " in *Kolichestvennye metody v sovetskoi i amerikanskoi istoriografii* (Moscow, 1983), 49. ("Quantification in the 1980s," in *Quantification Methods in Soviet and American Historiography*).
4. Robert William Fogel and G. R. Elton, *Which Road to the Past? Two Views of History* (New Haven, London, 1984), 2, 76–80.
5. Rabb, "Quantification in Historical Research":594–95.
6. See J. J. Kahk and I. D. Kovalchenko, "Metodologicheskie problemy primeneniia kolichestvennykh metodov v istoricheskikh issledovaniiakh," *Istorija SSSP* 5 (1974):100–1. ("Methodological Problems in Using Quantification Methods in Historical Studies").
7. V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (*Works*), 5th ed. (Moscow, 1958-65), 16:206.
8. See L. I. Borodkin, *Mnogomernôi statisticheskii analiz v istoricheskikh issledovaniiakh* (Moscow, 1986), 108–9, 129–33. (*Multi-dimensional Analysis in Historical Studies*).
9. See M. Hammarberg, "Analiz istoricheskikh dannykh o vyborakh v SShA," in *Kolichestvennye metody* . . . :316–17. ("Analysis of Historical Data on Balloting in the U.S.A.").
10. See T. K. Rabb, "Razvitie kvantifikatsii v istoricheskom issledovanii," in *Kolichestvennye metody* . . . :75. ("Development of Quantification Methods in Historical Studies").
11. A. G. Bogue, "Kvantifikaciia v 80-kh godakh . . . " 37–68.
12. L. I. Borodkin, *Mnogomernyi statisticheskii analiz* . . . , 124.
13. See Juhan Kahk, *Peasant and Lord in the Process of Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism in the Baltics* (Tallinn, 1982), 59–60.
14. B. N. Mironov, "Soziale Struktur und soziale Mobilität der russischen Bauernschaft vom 16.bis 19. Jahrhundert," *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 4 (1976):199–208.
15. V. K. Iatsunskii, *Izbrannye trudy* (Moscow, 1973), 273. (*Selected Works*).
16. I. D. Kovalchenko, "O kharaktere i formakh rassloeniia pomeshchitskikh krestan Rossii v pervoi polovine XIX v.," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 17 (1945):38, 91, 95, 128. ("About the Character and Forms of Differentiation of Manorial Peasants in Russia in the First Half of the 19th Century"). Later, such a method of studying the "fates of individuals" was used by Swedish historian S. Martinius: *Peasant Destinies. The History of 552 Swedes Born 1810–1812* (Stockholm, 1977).
17. *Iz istorii ekonomicheskoi i obshchestvennoi zhizni Rossii* (Moscow,

1976). (*History of the Economic and Social Development of Russia*).

18. See *Sovremennye tendentsii kliometricheskogo analiza ekonomicheskoi istorii SShA* (Moscow, 1982), 11. (*Contemporary Tendencies of Cliometrical Analyses of the Economical History of the U.S.A.*).
19. A. Keyssar, *Out of Work: The First Century of Unemployment in Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA, 1986), 47.
20. Michael Kammen, "The Historian's Vocation and the State of the Discipline in the United States," in *The Past Before Us*, ed. Michael Kammen (Ithaca, NY, 1980), 21.
21. T. Hershberg, A Burstein, and R. Dockhorn, "Verkettung von Daten," in *Historisch-Sozialwissenschaftliche Forschungen* 8 (1975):35. See, for example, E. Shorter and Ch. Tilly, *Strikes in France 1830–1968* (London, 1974).
22. P. N. Stearns, "Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History," in *The Past Before Us*, 212–13.
23. K. N. Conzen, "Quantification and the New Urban History," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13:4 (1983):668.
24. Georg G. Iggers, *New Directions in European Historiography* (Middletown, CT, 1975), 4.
25. Much credit for such organizing goes to Professor Theodore K. Rabb of Princeton University, and member of the Soviet Academy of Science Prof. I. Kovalchenko.

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